

R E V I E W

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OF THE

TRACT CONTROVERSY:

BEING SUBSTANTIALLY

A REPRINT OF AN EDITORIAL ARTICLE IN THE NEW-YORK
JOURNAL OF COMMERCE, OF APRIL 19th, 22d, AND 24th, 1845.

CONTAINED ALSO IN EXTRAS OF THE SAME PAPER, DATED APRIL 23d AND 26th.

NEW-YORK:
LEAVITT, TROW AND COMPANY,
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1845.



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REVIEW, ETC.

THE "Synod's Committee" having at length "submitted their case to the Christian public in full confidence of a righteous verdict," it is a duty incumbent upon somebody, we know not whom, to sum up for the defence. The Tract Society, as such, has not seen fit to enter the lists with the Synod's Committee; perhaps deeming it unnecessary, perhaps inexpedient, perhaps relying upon their conscious integrity, and the testimony borne to the value of their labors by the results. An instrumentality so blest, and so full of blessings to mankind, cannot be otherwise than good. It may not be perfect, (for what human instrumentality is perfect?) but its heavenly fruits, so uniformly produced, admonish good men to beware with what intent and in what manner they assail it, lest in remedying supposed defects, which perchance may not be defects, they should do infinite mischief, without any corresponding benefit. If, however, any such men should feel constrained by a regard to the highest interests of the Society and its greatest usefulness—objects ever dear to their hearts—to complain of the course pursued by its managers in any particular, it might be presumed that they would state their difficulties privately to those gentlemen, in a spirit of Christian kindness, before sounding a public alarm; and that even if foiled in the first instance, they would still persevere, with that charity which suffereth long, and only resort to publicity as a last and dreaded alternative. And when it became obvious that there was no other practicable mode of arresting the evil, it might be presumed that men of the character supposed, whose friendship for the Society was only surpassed by their love of truth and duty, would come to the task with a manifest reluctance,—a disposition to make the grounds of offence as few as the truth would warrant, and a readiness to put the most favorable construction upon

the acts against which they were compelled to remonstrate. Such are the dictates of true friendship, and such is the spirit of Christianity. Such, we may add, is the forbearance pre-eminently due to a popular institution which has no ecclesiastical organization to support it, and depends for its very existence upon public confidence; a basis necessarily frail under any circumstances, but especially so when exposed to the buffetings of Sectarianism, with all its jealousies and suspicions.

Twenty years ago the American Tract Society was founded, after much deliberation, and with many fears. The good men who originated it, had studied human nature deeply, and knew that all its tendencies were selfish,—that even when partially sanctified, it was still selfish, and liable to be led away by zeal for a sect, under the honest, perhaps, but mistaken conviction, that it was prompted by pure charity. They knew that the pride of sect was in itself as powerful a motive of action, and *might* be as unholy, as the pride of political partisanship; and that in proportion as vital godliness declined, sectarianism would revive and flourish. Still they hoped for the best. Hear what they say—the first Executive Committee of the American Tract Society,—in their address to the Christian Public:

“It has long been a doubtful point whether Christians of different denominations could unite their efforts beyond the single endeavor of distributing the Holy Scriptures without note or comment. And yet the body of Christ is one. In all that pertains to the essential principles of Christianity, it cannot be otherwise than that there exists a union of affection and sentiment among all good men, by whatever name they may be called; and we are persuaded this harmony exists to a degree beyond the anticipation not only of the more vigilant and cautious, but of the more indulgent and liberal. All good men receive the Holy Scriptures as containing a complete and entire system of divine truths, by whose unerring standard every opinion is to be tried and decided. So long as they love the Bible, they cannot be at war with one another. And so long as they believe the truths of the Bible, are they united in their religious sentiments. * * * Were there a more scrupulous regard to the infallible judgment of God, and a less scrupulous regard to the fallible judgment of men; if the rivalry of denominations were merged in the rivalry of benevolent enterprise; if the fear of God and the love of Jesus Christ, if a tender compassion for the salvation of sinners, and a tender affection toward all the friends of the Redeemer, were the paramount principles of action, chilling alienations would pass away, heart burning suspicions would find no place, mutual criminations would be suppressed, more importance would be attached to the things in which we agree,

and less to those in which we differ; there would be more of the soul of union; and while the enemies of our religion would be again constrained to bear the honorable testimony 'See how these Christians love one another,' we ourselves should sing, 'Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.'"

In this spirit the American Tract Society was founded, and in this spirit it has been nobly sustained, until its annual receipts have increased from \$10,000 to near \$150,000, and its issues in an equal proportion. By its quiet, unobtrusive, benevolent course,—by its obviously good intentions and tendencies,—by its exemption from political and ecclesiastical influences,—by the vast amount of good it had accomplished and was accomplishing, it had lived down all opposition, and was regarded with favor, not only by the numerous evangelical denominations represented in its organization, but to a certain extent by other denominations, and by men of no denomination. The hundred colporteurs in the service of the Society, found, wherever they went, a surprising readiness to receive its publications; and often in new settlements, where denominational Tracts of any description would have had but few readers, (so diversified were the religious or irreligious notions of the people,) the publications of the Am. Tract Society were welcomed by all, or nearly all,—it being universally understood that they were designed, not to make men Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, or Episcopalians, but Christians, in the best sense of that word. Certainly the American Tract Society never saw a day of brighter promise, than that which preceded the development, which has since been more fully made, of a spirit of alienation, and distrust of the Society's management, on the part of a few individuals, chiefly clergymen of the New School Presbyterian church, some of whom are men of considerable standing and influence. The first that *we* knew of the movement, (though it appears to have originated some time previously, and the plan of operations to have been marked out,) was the publication in the New-York Evangelist, and Observer of Nov. 7th and 9th, of the first document of the Synod's Committee, introduced as follows:

"Messrs. Editors:—I am directed by the Committee of the Synod of New-York and New-Jersey on the subject of the mutilation of books by the Am. Tract Society, to transmit to you for publication, the following statement relative to alterations made by the Society in its edition of D'Aubigne's History of the Reformation.

J. W. M'LANE, Clerk of Committee."

This announcement came upon us like a clap of thunder out of a clear sky. What! said we to ourselves, is it possible that matters have come to this pass, and yet we be so ignorant of it? Is the Tract Society already tried and condemned?—for we understood from this announcement, as was generally understood by others, [see Newark Daily Advertiser, and other newspapers published at the time,] that the committee had been appointed by the Synod *for the purpose* of making such a publication, or at least, with authority to make it. And of course we inferred, that the managers of the Society had been long and faithfully and kindly labored with, in order to convince them of their error, and induce them to change their course; or that the betrayal of their trust was so palpable, and the offence so great, that even the common forms of civility, not to say Christian courtesy, had been deemed unnecessary and out of place. But on inquiry we learned that the Synod had taken no action on the subject, except to appoint a *Committee of Investigation*; and that this was done at the solicitation, chiefly, of the very men composing the Committee, and upon representations made by themselves. The minute of Synod is as follows:

“Rev. Messrs. Cox, Eddy, Brinsmade, Hatfield and M’Lane, were appointed to examine certain publications of the American Tract Society which are reputed to have been altered from the original copies, for the purpose of ascertaining the facts: to report at the next meeting of this body.”

This language is altogether decorous,—and the appointment of the committee, under the circumstances, cannot be complained of. For although the Synod of New-York and New Jersey, New School, has no better right to call the Tract Society to account than any other Synod, either of the Old School or New, or any Synod of the Cumberland Presbyterian, Lutheran, German Reformed, or Dutch Reformed Church, or any Association of the Congregational or Baptist Churches, or any Diocesan Convention of the Episcopal Church, (nor indeed is the Society the exclusive property of the clergy,) yet the first named Synod did no more than justice to the managers of the American Tract Society, in assuming that suggestions from any friendly source in regard to their course of action, either past or future, would receive respectful consideration. They however did not authorize *this Committee* to do any thing of the kind. Perhaps they thought

them too impetuous, or too full of prejudice, or too dictatorial, to make such suggestions as would be judicious, or in a way to produce conviction. At any rate, they conferred no such power. Much less did they authorize them to make an appeal to the public, over the heads both of the Synod and Society. The single and only duty charged upon them was, to "EXAMINE *certain publications*" which they themselves had complained of to the Synod, (either with or without examination,) and report *to the Synod*, next October,—just one year from the date of their appointment. This shows, at least, that the Synod did not think there was any necessity for immediate action; and it may also have been intended to hint that a little *deliberation*, as well as examination, would in no wise harm the Committee, or disqualify them for making a discreet report.

The Committee, however, were not to be curbed by any such restriction. They had received their appointment, and were determined to make the most of it. In the exuberance of their zeal, they could not wait till next October, but hurried off to the printing offices of the above mentioned papers with their first *official document*, almost before the ink was dry which recorded their appointment; and actually before the article had been seen by more than three of the five members composing the Committee.* No wonder that a document so produced and published, should bear the marks of haste, if nothing worse. We will mention a few out of many instances of injustice to the Tract Society in this document, so palpable that we doubt if any reader can fail to perceive it.

The first is contained in the introductory notice signed "J. W. M'Lane," where the Committee are spoken of as a Committee "on the subject of the *mutilation* of books by the American Tract Society." Now the Synod appointed no such Committee, and to have done so would have been to condemn the Society in advance. "Alterations" was the word employed by the Synod: and even this was qualified by the expression "reputed to have been made." *Alteration* implies neither censure nor approbation. *Mutilation* always implies censure. We are far from saying that the Committee, or their Clerk, *intended*

* After a part of it had gone to press, the other two members saw it in the printing office, and at their suggestion, as we understand, the last paragraph was added, which assures the public (without which assurance the fact would never have been suspected,) that the attack proceeded "not only from the hands of friends, but from motives of friendship."

to misrepresent the act of the Synod, or to create an impression so false and injurious to the American Tract Society as *was* created by the manner of the above announcement. Yet the exceeding unfairness of the representation may be appealed to as showing the temper of the Committee, or their Clerk, in approaching this important investigation, and their total unfitness, in such a temper, for the delicate and responsible task they had assumed. We say *assumed*, for we have before shown that the Synod gave them no authority to drag the Tract Society before the public as a culprit, or to make any public exposition of its acts. On the contrary, they were instructed to make their report *to the Synod*; which clearly implies that the Synod reserved the question of a public appeal for its own consideration and decision. It is true the Chairman of the Committee (Dr. Cox) says in his notes to D'Aubigne's letter, "We know probably what we are about,"—and the Boston Puritan, after an interview with the same gentleman, says it has learned that the "Committee understood what they were about." Others have been equally confident, who in fact "knew not what they did." For ourselves, we shall be slow to believe that the Synod, after appointing a Committee for a specified purpose, gave them *secret instructions* to do something entirely different, and in fact inconsistent with the avowed object of their appointment.

But we pass to another instance of palpable unfairness in the document referred to. Although of little consequence in itself, it is important as showing the proneness of the Committee to imagine evil where none exists. Speaking of the notices published by the Society relative to their edition of this work, the Synod's Committee say:

"In the Messenger, of Dec. 1843, the public were informed that the Society were about to publish '*D'Aubigne's History of the Great Reformation*', in three volumes, with the Notes complete, except that a few sentences, *unessential* to the integrity of the work, are omitted."

Who would think that this notice could be found fault with, as implying that "the changes are confined to the Notes, as the grammatical construction indicates." If the reader knows any thing of grammar, we ask him to decide whether there is any foundation at all for this petty criticism. We say there is none; and that nobody would dream of such a thing, who was not as eager in search after errors as a hound after game. All that grammatical construction has to do with language, is, to place the words so that the meaning will be clearly

understood. Where the meaning is explicit from the very terms of the language employed, grammatical construction does not indicate any thing to the contrary. In the present case, the language implies that the omissions may have been made either from the text or notes, or both. The idea that they were made exclusively from the notes, is repelled by the expression "unessential to the integrity of the work;" for things essential to the integrity of a work, are not apt to be put in the form of notes. Upon a basis so flimsy rests the Committee's first specification under the general charge that the Tract Society's notices of the changes in D'Aubigne are "calculated to make a wrong impression upon the mind of the reader."

A third instance of great unfairness is found in the Committee's comments upon the following passage. The right column is from the Tract Society's edition; the left from the "pure edition," as the Committee call it.

307. *A new baptism was to be their instrument for gathering their congregation, which was to consist exclusively of true believers. "The baptism of infants," said they, "is a horrible abomination—a flagrant impiety, invented by the evil spirit and by Pope Nicholas II."*

307. 'Their congregation was to consist exclusively of true believers. "The baptism of infants," said they, "is a horrible abomination—a flagrant impiety, invented by the evil spirit and by Pope Nicholas II."

The Committee say,—

"This paragraph goes beyond any thing that we have yet met with. The fact left out or altered, however it obscures the meaning of the author, is as nothing compared with that which is retained. Read the following sentence and judge: 'The baptism of infants is *a horrible abomination! A FLAGRANT IMPIETY!! INVENTED BY THE EVIL SPIRIT AND POPE NICHOLAS II!!!*' This impious language against infant baptism is allowed to remain; but not a *syllable in its favor* is permitted to appear. The Committee feel that thus singular injustice is done to the great mass of Christians who support the American Tract Society."

A little further on, in the "pure edition," occur the Theses of Zuingle in favor of infant baptism, which the historian says were "triumphantly maintained" by himself and friends at a public discussion in the Council Hall of Zurich. In the Tract Society's edition these passages are omitted. This gives the Committee opportunity to repeat their comment above quoted, in substance, as follows:

"Let the reader remark the Theses of Zuingle here expunged, and recall the following sentence which has been allowed to remain: 'The baptism of

infants is a *horrible abomination*—A FLAGRANT IMPIETY, INVENTED BY THE EVIL SPIRIT AND POPE NICHOLAS II.,’ and then say if there be not painful *injustice* done here to the great mass of Christians who believe in infant baptism as a precious Bible doctrine.”

The capitals and italics are as published by the Committee. They really seem to suppose that their criticism is legitimately drawn, and that it places the Tract Society in a position of extreme awkwardness and difficulty. Surely men of intelligence and education would not be so stupid, if they were not blinded by prejudice. They would not need to be told, that with just as much propriety the Bible might be charged with teaching Atheism, by the expression put into the mouth of a fool, “There is no God,” as the Tract Society anti-pædobaptism, by publishing as such, the ravings of the Anabaptists (or fanatics as they are commonly called), while the whole current of the language, page after page, goes to discountenance, in general, both them and their doctrines. The stress laid upon this item by the Committee, who say it “goes beyond any thing we have yet seen,” shows the straits to which they were driven for materials out of which to frame an indictment. If this is the worst of the Society’s offences, or the worst which the Committee knew of at the time of writing their first article, the public will judge how far they were justified in sounding an alarm. It should be noted that the chief ground of complaint in this case is, not that a passage was omitted, but that it was retained. For the Committee say, “The fact left out or altered, however it obscures the meaning of the author, is as nothing compared with that which is retained.” They would convey the impression that the Tract Society, in making the few alterations and omissions necessary to enable them to publish this excellent work, consistently with the principles upon which the Society was founded, have done it in such a way as to favor the views of the Baptists. Yet in support of this position the chief evidence presented, is that above quoted, which, as we have shown, amounts to nothing. If in the Society’s edition the Theses of Zuingli and other matters favoring infant baptism are omitted, so also is the statement so often appealed to by Baptists, that the doctrine of the prophets of Zwickau respecting baptism, i. e. the doctrine of the Baptists, seemed to Melancthon “agreeable to reason.” Had the Tract Society published either the one or the other, they would have given just cause of complaint; and so far would have forfeited their claim to the confidence of the Christian public. The only ques-

tion is, whether, if they could not publish the work entire, they should have published it at all; and this question, or the principle involved in it, we shall have occasion to consider in the sequel.

It would not be practicable, within any reasonable limits, to examine the Committee's criticisms in detail; and it is the less necessary, as the work has already been done to a considerable extent, as it respects D'Aubigne, by a writer understood to be a distinguished clergyman of the Reformed Dutch Church, who signs himself "Truth in Love." [See N. Y. Evangelist of Nov. 28th, and N. Y. Observer of the same week.] If the reader will bear in mind the criticisms of the Committee, we will subjoin a few paragraphs from the review, by way of reply:

Vol. I, p. 8. "*Hierarchy* refers equally to Episcopacy as to Rome," is the objection of the Synod's Committee. Yes, but did the author so refer? Is he fighting against the Episcopacy of Romaine, Newton, Cecil, Whately; or against *High Church Puseyism*? and why against that, but because it and Rome are similar and nearly identical, and both pull in the same direction. It leads to Rome, and Rome is "the mother of harlots and the abomination of the earth." In saying *Roman Church*, therefore, instead of *hierarchy*, the Tract Society say all that is necessary, and avoid what might be misconstrued, and be offensive and unjust. Low church does *not* labor to "reconnect catholicity with popery," although it is episcopal.

P. 19. The author uses *Bishop of Rome*, as synonymous with *Roman pastor* in two succeeding sentences. The Tract Society use the personal pronoun *him* instead of Roman pastor, and we think that to the common reader they make it plainer than the author does, that the *very Bishop himself*, and not the pastors of Rome generally, are meant as being "treated by the Bishops of other parts of the empire as their equal simply." It is a stronger form of the fact—a stronger argument than the author's. It is asked, "why the recognition of pastors is blotted out." We cannot tell, but we suppose because the *Roman pastors* as a body did not encroach, but the Bishops of Rome did, and that too on considerations connected with the relation and locality of Rome. For ourselves we *prefer* the Society's phraseology, as equally true, and far more suggestive. Thus much for another exceeding small dust to the balance.

We think that the author's expression, page 248, (omitted by the Society,) "*Here we see the beginning of the Presbyterian system*," in its unqualified form and breadth, is unwarrantable and misleading. *All the Prelatists in the land* will thank the Committee of Synod and the author for an admission that comes so near to their own groundless and untenable allegations, "that the Presbyterian system began with Calvin." The bitter outcry respecting this omission produced not only surprise but regret. It showed that the

Committee in their haste failed to discern the true import of the passage on which they animadverted; and their comment seems almost like exciting odium against the Society—for not doing what they had no right to do, what they wished to avoid the appearance of doing, operating as they do in a field where denominational agencies concentrate; where, if any where, as the Committee of Synod's own course of action shows, jealousy is wakeful, and feelings "hair hung, breeze shaken." "The historical fact," lament the Committee, "that the Swiss churches asserting their right as Christians, *were led to adopt the Presbyterian system*, is blotted out!" What is this but a denominational wail in a neutral camp, in which no parties are recognized but the Son of God, and the Devil whose works he came to destroy?

We confess ourselves surprised at the stress laid on the omission by the Society, of the author's arguments respecting *the validity of Farel's ordination*; because it is an *extraordinary case*, and he defends it *in this character*. He says expressly, "We do not see in it that which becomes the congregations of the Lord—among whom every thing should be done *decently and in order*," and whose God is "*not the God of confusion*." "*Extraordinary emergencies justify extraordinary measures*;" and yet the Committee complain that the omission of a paragraph is a concession to Episcopacy! Be it strong or weak in its bearing on apostolical succession, the confession that the case was extraordinary and the measures extraordinary, disqualifies it for use as a weapon in a contest respecting *constitutional and established order*.

Thus far from the article signed "Truth in Love."

"*Pure Edition.*"

Society's Edition.

31. At the beginning it was a society of brethren, and now an absolute monarchy is reared in the midst of them. All Christians were priests of the living God (1 Pet. II. 9), with humble *pastors* for their guidance. But a lofty head is uplifted from the midst of *these pastors*; a mysterious voice utters words full of pride; an iron hand compels all men, small and great, rich and poor, freemen and slaves to take the mark of its power. The holy and primitive equality of souls before God is lost sight of. Christians are divided into two strangely unequal camps. On the one side a separate class of priests daring to usurp the name of the Church, and claiming to be possessed of *peculiar privileges in the sight of the Lord*.

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The changes are indicated by the words in italic. The Synod's Committee say:—

"Here are unwarrantable liberties. For *pastors* we have *apostles* and *teachers*, and with 'divine prerogatives,' instead of 'peculiar privileges in the sight of the Lord.' Why did not the Society introduce at once the 'three orders' of 'bishops, priests, and deacons?' Is it true, 'that a lofty head was uplifted from the midst of the *apostles and teachers*?'"

The language of D'Aubigne is extremely bold. He is contrasting the state of the church at the rise of Antichrist, with what it was at the beginning of the Christian system. He traverses this whole period of nearly six centuries, as if it were but a moment. In no other sense does he mean to say that an absolute monarchy was reared in the midst of the 'society of brethren' which existed 'at the beginning,' or that a lofty head (the Pope) was uplifted from the midst of the primitive pastors. The process of uplifting extended to the commencement of the 7th century. If it be admitted, and surely no one will deny, that there were apostles and teachers at the beginning, then it follows, that a lofty head was as truly uplifted "from the midst" of *them*, as from the midst of the *pastors* of the same day. Neither is *literally* true; but *figuratively*, both are true, and one as much as the other. Moreover, the language of the Society's edition is nearer to the Bible description of the primitive church than D'Aubigne's; for it is said, Eph. 4: 11, he gave them "apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers."

Alluding to the above extract, the Committee ask, "Why did not the Society introduce at once the 'three orders' of 'bishops, priests, and deacons?'" Whereas, if any denomination represented in the Tract Society has cause to complain, it is the Episcopalians. The primitive church as exhibited in the extract, was strictly republican; "a Society of brethren;" "all Christians were priests of the living God."

The language of the Synod's Committee implies that in the Society's edition, apostles and teachers are represented to possess "divine prerogatives;"* whereas the persons claiming divine prerogatives [such as the power of forgiving sin] are expressly denominated "usurpers." If they only meant to say that the Society's edition substitutes "divine prerogatives" in place of "peculiar privileges in

* We are not quite sure that the Committee intended to be so understood; though, if they did not, they were very unfortunate in placing the word "with" before "divine prerogatives."

the sight of the Lord," the fact is readily admitted. The change of meaning, however, is very slight, and the reason for making it is obvious.

This work of D'Aubigne, it appears, is the only work of any living author, which has been published by the Society without previous consultation with the author himself; and the publishing Committee, in their recent address to the supporters and friends of the Society, express their regret that they were induced to depart from the rule in a single instance. Their motive in so doing, as we learn from the Address of the Boston Committee, was, to give circulation to the work while at the height of its popularity, and to make it available at the earliest possible moment, in resisting the encroachments of Popery, especially in the new settlements, for which it was so well adapted. They, however, forwarded to the author a statement of all the passages changed or omitted, expressing a hope that their course would be satisfactory to him, in view of the fact that without such changes they would have been unable to publish the work, consistently with the basis of the Society's union. But before receiving a reply, they had the mortification to find that the Synod's Committee were endeavoring to forestall the judgment of the author, by making known to him (to use the Committee's own language) "the views of the Synod on the subject of the alterations made in his work." How did the Committee know the views of the Synod in regard to that matter? We are not aware that those views had been expressed, or even formed. If they had been, the Synod would hardly have appointed a Committee for the purpose of "ascertaining the facts." D'Aubigne, however, with that discernment which belongs to true greatness, understood the position of the Committee at a glance, and framed his reply accordingly. As it has been extensively published and read, it is sufficient to say here, that while treating the Committee with marked kindness and respect, it is nevertheless so full of generous sentiments towards the Society, that the Synod's Committee, in giving it to the public, thought fit, through their Chairman, to accompany it with copious notes of their own,—in one of which they express the hope that the author "never will" do as he intimated his intention to do, viz.—"see what he can yield among the retrenchments that have been made, in order to enable the Society to publish a new edition which shall have his approbation"

The Publishing Committee of the Tract Society, in their recent Address, say he "is now revising" the work for this object. So that probably, whatever difference of opinion may exist in regard to the Society's edition of D'Aubigne, will soon be rendered nugatory by the substitution of a new edition prepared by the author himself.

It ought however to be borne distinctly in mind, that the omissions in the Society's edition of D'Aubigne amount to but four pages in 1300, or *less than one-third of one per cent.*; and that the fact of omissions having been made to this extent, was distinctly announced in the last Annual Report. It is also alluded to in the work itself; where it is said, "A few sentences not essential to the integrity of the work are omitted." The alterations other than omissions are very few in comparison to the extent of the work, and are only such as were deemed necessary by the Publishing Committee, (each member of which is pledged to protect the peculiarities of his own denomination,) in order to bring it within the scope of the Society's operations, at the same time retaining, as far as possible, the train of thought and connexion of ideas presented by the writer. It seems to us that, of all men in the world, Presbyterians and Congregationalists have the *least* cause to complain that a work so favorable, in its general bearing, to their own peculiar views, even after the slight deductions made in the Tract Society's edition, should be adopted and circulated by that *catholic* Institution;—for the whole warp and woof of it are against the efficacy of forms, succession, and all such things

Next to D'Aubigne's work, i. e. the Tract Society's edition of it, as a butt for the criticisms of the Synod's Committee, is Edwards's History of Redemption; a book full of elevated piety and Christian truth, but, as originally published, containing several sentences and phrases in conflict with the denominational views of Episcopalians, Baptists and Methodists. The Committee make a great display of alterations, omissions, &c., in this work, dividing them into classes and subdivisions,—and the superficial reader, or he who trusted to the Committee's expressions of surprise and horror, rather than to his own senses, would infer that the work had been shockingly mangled. But such is not the fact:—on the contrary, the grand total of omissions, in a volume of 444 pages, is but 70 lines, only 30 of which consist of denominational matter. In eighteen instances the term *elect* is omitted or exchanged for synonymous terms, such as "God's people," "his

saints," &c., while in fifteen instances it is retained, as are other kindred terms throughout.

The Committee speak of "many alterations which respect simply the style of the author," but give no instances. The alterations which they specify, are as follows :

Instead of saying, "This sect [the Anabaptists] as it first appeared in Germany, were vastly more extravagant than the present Anabaptists in England," the Society's edition (p. 346) substitutes the word *later* instead of "the present." The object of this change may have been, to prevent common readers, who might not bear in mind the fact that the work was written more than a century ago, from applying the words "the present" to a date much *later* than that intended by the writer.

"Again on p. 281 [say the Synod's Committee] we read, 'Here is an appointment of Christian *baptism*. This ordinance indeed had a beginning before. Both John the Baptist and Christ baptized.' The idea conveyed here is, that the ordinance of baptism began with John the Baptist. But as Edwards wrote it, no such idea is conveyed. He puts its beginning back before the appearance of the herald of the Saviour. His words are, 'This ordinance indeed had a beginning before John the Baptist and Christ baptized.'"

A little too fast, gentlemen ; as you will see by referring to Leavitt & Trow's reprint of the Worcester edition, where the passage reads thus :

"This ordinance indeed had a beginning before ; John the Baptist and Christ both baptized."

The Worcester edition, it must be remembered, is that which the Committee claim as the standard. The import of the passage is *precisely* that given in the Tract Society's edition ; and the language also, except that in the latter the word "both" is differently, though better placed, and a period instead of a semicolon is put after the word "before." So much for this "painful instance of mutilation."

On p. 345, where it is said that after Queen Mary's time "there were very severe persecutions by the High Churchmen, who symbolized in many things with the Papists," the Tract Society's edition substitutes the words "those in authority," instead of High Churchmen. On the same page, where it is said "Scotland was also the scene, for

many years, of cruelties and blood," &c., the words "by the hands of High Churchmen" are omitted in the Tract Society's edition.

On p. 347, speaking of Arianism, the Tract Society's edition reads, "Of late years this heresy has been extensively spread;" whereas in the old edition it stands: "And of late years this heresy has been revived in England, and greatly prevails there, both in the Church of England and among Dissenters." We suppose it would be denied that Arianism "greatly prevails" in the Church of England at this time, even if it were admitted that it did in Edwards' day.

On page 329, Tract Society's edition, we read that "The clergy in general, and especially the Bishop of Rome, assumed more and more authority. From a bishop he became a metropolitan, which is equivalent to an archbishop; then a patriarch. Afterwards he claimed the power of universal bishop over the whole Christian Church." In the Worcester edition it stands thus: "The clergy in general, and especially the Bishop of Rome, assumed more and more authority to himself. *In primitive times he was only a minister of a congregation; then a standing moderator of a presbytery; then a diocesan bishop; then a metropolitan,*" &c. The Synod's Committee say that by this change "Episcopacy is made to appear the first form of Church government." We doubt it. It may appear so to the Synod's Committee, but it does not to us. For, immediately preceding the passage quoted, Edwards says: "The rise of Antichrist was gradual. The Christian church corrupted itself in many things, presently after Constantine's time; growing more and more superstitious in its worship, and by degrees bringing many ceremonies into the worship of God, till at length they brought in the worship of saints, and set up images in the churches." Then follows the passage above quoted. Now if the example of the Roman church, in its then state of corruption, as distinctly avowed by the author, proves that the form of church government at that time in use, was the "*first form of church government,*" does it not also prove that "the worship of saints," and "setting up images in the churches," were primitive usages? The passage as published by the Tract Society says nothing, and implies nothing (that we can perceive), as to the form of church government five centuries before. As originally published, it does. The three lines omitted by the Tract Society, involve the whole question at issue between the Congregationalists, Presbyterians, &c., on the one part, and

Episcopalians and Catholics on the other; and also between Congregationalists and Presbyterians; for Congregationalism knows no such thing as Presbyteries, or moderators of Presbyteries. To publish such a passage, would have been in direct violation of the principles of the Society's union, and would have created ten times as great an outcry as its omission does.

On p. 353 we read, "In this kingdom [England] those principles on which the power of godliness depends, are in a great measure exploded, and Arianism, Socinianism, and Deism prevail." Here the word "Arminianism" is omitted; and the Synod's Committee make a great ado about it, of course. We know not what particular considerations led to its omission, but one of them probably was, that the popular signification of the word has so much changed since Edwards' day, that it would almost of course be misunderstood. It is now applied chiefly, we believe, in this country, to the Methodists; among whom "the power of godliness" prevails to as great an extent, probably, as in any other denomination. In Edwards' day, Arminianism in New England was chiefly confined to the Congregational churches, especially in the Eastern part of Massachusetts; and it was of the most latitudinarian and exceptionable character. It afterwards glided into Unitarianism, in which form it appears at present. Now suppose the Tract Society had *not* been restrained by its Constitution; would it have been right to convey the impression to thousands and thousands of unsophisticated minds, that Edwards denounced Methodism in its present character, as opposed to the power of vital godliness? Would it have been just to Edwards himself?

The Committee cite two instances in support of the general charge that "the doctrinal sentiments of the author have been altered." The first is as follows:

"On p. 23 [say the Committee] we have this: 'God's design was to restore the ruins of the fall, and therefore we read of the restitution of all things, Acts 3: 21.' The statement of Edwards is this: 'God's design was perfectly to restore all the ruins of the fall, *so far as concerns the elect part of the world by his Son*, and therefore we read of the restitution of all things, Acts 3: 21.' Here the limited, qualified statement of the author, is converted into a universal proposition, and is made to teach what is not true."

The Committee must have overlooked the fact that the words 'perfectly' and 'all' are omitted in the Society's edition. Other

wise they would doubtless have printed them in italics, according to their usual mode of indicating alterations. Now the force of these words, taken together, is not small ; and so much as their omission deducts from universality, so much is deducted in the above passage as published by the Tract Society. The phrase “ restitution of all things,” being the same in both editions, and withal a Bible expression,—the Synod’s Committee will not pretend that there is any Universalism or “ untruth ” about it. And as to the phrase, “ restore the ruins of the fall,” (the only remaining one about which a question can be raised,) it is sufficient to say that it has been in the mouths of high Calvinists and other good men for more than a century, without suspicion of its heterodoxy. In Watts’ Hymns, (78th, 2d book,) we read :

“ His living power, and dying love,
Redeemed unhappy men ;
And raised the ruins of our race
To life and God again.”

So also the following lines, which are luckily not expunged nor altered in the edition published by an intimate associate of the Synod’s Committee :

“ Adam the second from the dust
Raises the ruins of the first.”

The sentiment is precisely as broad, and identically the same, as that above quoted from the Tract Society’s edition of Edwards. And as the compiler in sundry instances modified Watts’ theology to suit his own views, it is fair to presume that what remains of Watts, in the compilation referred to, was deemed orthodox and correct.

“ Again, on page 24, [say the Committee,] we have a still more painful alteration. . The author is made to say, ‘ Another great design of God in the work of redemption, was to gather together in one, all things in Christ, in heaven and in earth, and to unite all in one body to God the Father.’ Now look at the statement as it appears in the original : ‘ Another great design of God in the work of redemption, was to gather together in one, all things in Christ, in heaven and in earth, *that is, all elect creatures ; to bring all elect creatures in heaven and in earth to an union one to another in one body, under one head,* and to unite all together in one body to God the Father.’ Here again all limitation is excluded, and God’s design is asserted to save all men ! Never have we seen a more egregious wrong done to any author ! Never has our eye lighted upon a more painful instance of mutilation !”

A little examination will show that the part omitted [which is printed in italics] is in the nature of a paraphrase ; that the part retained, i. e. the preceding part, is pure Bible, taken from Ephesians 1 : 10 ; that it is a fair and *full* quotation of the whole text so far as bearing upon the point in question, with only such slight variations of language as Edwards himself introduced, and which make it a more literal translation from the original than the version in common use ; that in the next sentence but one, (in the Tract Society's edition as well as others,) not only the opposite of Universalism, but election itself is clearly taught, in the expression, ' God designed by this work to perfect and complete the glory of *all the elect by Christ* ;' and that in another part of the volume (p. 262 of the Tract Society's edition, and it is the same in other editions,) Edwards himself left the quotation without a paraphrase, thus proving that he was not afraid to trust the Bible to speak its own language without *addition*, (which we believe is the antipodes of "*mutilation*," bating the sinister import of the latter,) lest it should teach some flagrant error. The fact is, there is no danger that Universalism will be learned from the Bible, except by detaching passages from their proper bearing and connexion, as the Synod's Committee have done in their criticisms upon the publications of the American Tract Society. In this way any book may be made to teach any thing that "suits the market." The Committee wind up by saying, "Never have we seen a more egregious wrong done to any author !" [precisely what he did to himself in another part of the volume ;] "Never has our eye lighted upon a more painful instance of mutilation !" [which simply restored passage to the form in which it was left by Inspiration itself.

The above are all the instances of *alteration* which the Committee specify, except those where the term "elect" is exchanged for "God's people," &c., as before remarked. Then there are a few sentences *omitted*, which are as follows :

"As Abraham had a seal of the covenant in circumcision, that was equivalent to baptism, so now he had a seal of it equivalent to the Lord's Supper." p. 65.

"The next thing, I would observe, is the institution of ecclesiastical councils for deciding controversies, and ordering the affairs of the church of Christ, of which we have an account in the 15th chapter of Acts." p. 285.

"Thus the Christian church was first formed from the nation of Israel : and, therefore, when the Gentiles were called, they were added to the Chris-

tian church of Israel, as the proselytes of old were to the Mosaic church of Israel. They were only grafted on the stock of Abraham, and were not a distinct tree; for they were all still the seed of Abraham and Israel; as Ruth the Moabitess and Uriah the Hittite and other proselytes of old, were the same people, and ranked as the seed of Israel." p. 285.

"After these [the Socinians] arose the Arminians. They take their name from a Dutchman, whose name was Jacobus Van Harmin, which, turned into Latin, is called Jacobus Arminius; and from his name the whole sect are called Arminians. This Jacobus Arminius was first a minister at Amsterdam, and then a professor of divinity in the University of Leyden. He had many followers in Holland. There was upon this a Synod of all the Reformed churches called together, who met at Dort in Holland. The Synod of Dort condemned them; but yet they spread and prevailed. They began to prevail in England in the reign of Charles I. especially in the Church of England. The Church of England divines before that were almost universally Calvinists; but since that, Arminianism has gradually more and more prevailed, till they are become almost universally Arminians. And not only so, but Arminianism has greatly prevailed among the Dissenters, and has spread greatly in New England as well as Old." p. 347.

These are all the *omissions* mentioned by the Committee. The last, they say, is "essential to the history of redemption." How more essential than the history of any other sect? That must have been a very broad history of redemption which includes a universal Church History. A thousand volumes of such paragraphs would not convey the slightest idea of redemption, or the least intimation that such a work had been achieved. We have thus mentioned *every instance of alteration or omission*, which the Synod's Committee specify as having been made in the Tract Society's edition of Edwards' History of Redemption. We have done so, that our readers may see the head and front, and in fact the whole body, of the Society's offending. The wonder is, that so large a volume, written by one of the staunchest old Puritans that ever trod the soil of New England,—a zealous opposer of prelacy, immersion and Arminianism,—could be made acceptable to the representatives of so many different denominations, by omissions so few and comparatively unimportant. The truths omitted are but as a grain of sand in comparison with those retained. The book is not modified in its great bearings an iota. It is as full of the Puritan Calvinism of Edwards as it ever was. Notwithstanding the "softening process" complained of by the Synod's Committee, the doctrines of divine sovereignty, election, &c., stand out with a prominence

that cannot be mistaken. And all this, with the unanimous consent and approbation of the Publishing Committee, no two members of which are of the same denomination, unless the Old and New School Presbyterians are the same denomination. It was a magnificent act of generosity, worthy to be admired, and which will be admired, by every man whose soul is not narrowed into a span by sectarian jealousy. It adds another to the ten thousand illustrations of the essential unity which exists between true Christians, of whatever name. And here we must quote a remark of the senior Secretary,—who has attended the meetings of the Publishing Committee, with very few exceptions, for twenty years, i. e. ever since the Society was formed,—that he has “never yet been able to determine which of the members of that Committee love the great essential truths of religion most.” They however are bound to protect the peculiarities of their own denominations. And it will be well if the scrutiny invited by the Synod’s Committee does not cause some of those denominations to feel that their representatives have yielded too much. Bigotry never exhibited her gaunt form in a contrast of greater meanness, than when she came forth from Presbyterianism to impugn this generosity of Episcopalians and Baptists. If the Society had taken the works of Episcopal or Baptist writers, and printed them with such slight modifications only, there might have been some cause for jealousy, perhaps; but for men to whom have been divided nine-tenths of the whole portion, to complain that they are over-reached, is any thing but creditable to their own liberality.

The adoption of Edwards’ History of Redemption by the American Tract Society has already been the means of putting in circulation thirty thousand copies of it,—whereas, without such adoption, probably not five thousand, if even one thousand, would have been circulated during the same period. Now as the Synod’s Committee have sought to avail themselves of the profound respect which most “descendants of the Puritans” entertain for the memory and doctrines of their venerable sires, it will be well for those descendants, (among whom we have the honor to be included,) to consider whether by insisting upon absolute entireness, and keeping the books of their great theologians at home, they will do more to extend the influence of Puritan principles, than by permitting a few grains to be deducted, commonly not one part in a hundred, and letting the rest fly over the land and world, aided not only by their own contributions, but by those of

others, of different names, who will join also their personal efforts, their influence and their prayers, for the promotion of so good an object. It may be true, as the Committee say, that the Tract Society “derives its support chiefly from those who sympathize with the teachings of Edwards;” but on the other hand, does it not expend its chief efforts in promulgating the doctrines of Edwards and those who sympathize with him. Not the shibboleths of a sect,—for it would degrade the memory of the Puritans to charge them with sectarianism; or at any rate they made it subordinate to the great work of (instrumentally) renovating and saving lost men. Their views of prelacy, church government, baptism, and other matters pertaining to the externals of religion, they regarded as important in their place; but never, never would they permit those views to impede the flight of the Angel having the everlasting Gospel to preach to them that dwell upon the earth. We pray that the mantle of their charity,—by which we mean their love to God and man,—may rest upon all their descendants. Let any one who “sympathizes with the teachings” of Edwards READ the publications of the American Tract Society, not in the spirit of prejudiced criticism, but that he may know and understand what they teach, and especially that he may be profited by it, and we pledge ourselves that he shall arise from the perusal with a heartfelt conviction that they contain,—nay, are full of,—the same great truths which Edwards taught, and which long before were taught by Him whose shoe’s latchet Edwards was not worthy to unloose.

Although D’Aubigne’s *Reformation and Edwards on Redemption* are the only works criticised in detail by the Synod’s Committee in their official communications to the public, several others have been subjected to the same process anonymously, under different signatures, chiefly by a member or members of the Synod’s Committee, as is well understood, through the columns of the *Philadelphia Christian Observer*. We shall notice but one of these unofficial criticisms, as we wish to confine ourselves mainly to the avowed publications and acts of the Committee. In the *Philad. Observer* of March 7th, under the signature of R., is a review of the Tract Society’s edition of *Mason’s Spiritual Treasury*, from which we make the following extract:

“Two or three [instances of alteration] have struck us painfully, in one of which there is the teaching of *positive error*. Speaking of the depravity

of human nature, the author says, 'Such its enmity to God as to take away the life of his dear and only Son.' This is altered so as to read, 'Such ~~its~~ enmity to God as to take away *the life of God*,' p. 383. Again, on the same page, the author says, 'Lord [Law,] thou hast sheathed thy strongest sting, and spent the poison of thy dart in the body of my Saviour.' This is changed, and reads thus, 'Lord, [Law,] thou hast sheathed thy strongest sting, and spent the poison of thy dart in the *body of my God*.' This language is neither biblical nor true. The Bible speaks of the death of Jesus—of Christ—of the Prince of Life, and of the Holy One, meaning the Saviour—but nowhere speaks of the *death of God*—it nowhere intimates that men, however wicked, ever took away *the life of God*. Such language is painful!

"Speaking of sin as shown to be sinful in the death of Christ, the author says, 'Here see the exceeding sinfulness of sin; view its crimson dye in the atoning blood of the Son of God.' This is not allowed to remain as it is, but is changed to this, 'Here see the exceeding sinfulness of sin; view its crimson dye in the *purple gore* of the Son of God.' p. 279. In the original it is the *atoning blood* of the Son of God, which makes sin appear exceedingly sinful; but here it is his *purple gore* that does this!!!"

A most convincing criticism no doubt! But unluckily for the critic, he has adopted some "mutilated" edition as the standard, whereas the Tract Society has published the passages precisely as they stand in the London edition of 1785, and also in the New Brunswick edition of 1811. Nor do the Publishing Committee know of any edition in which they are otherwise printed. Such being the case, we should like to ask the Rev. critic whether the Tract Society did right in publishing the passages as they were written, with all their "painfulness" and "positive error," or whether they should have so altered them as to avoid these objections. Certainly there is no need of a Society for the diffusion of "positive error," for enough of that will be done voluntarily. On the other hand, to change "positive error" into positive truth, would be, according to the dialect of the Synod's Committee, to "pervert" the meaning of the author. Nor could the dilemma be avoided by omitting the paragraph; for this would be "mutilation." We wish the gentleman to apply the principles of the Synod's Committee to this particular case. If he cannot do it in one case, how can he expect the Tract Society to do it in ten thousand? It is a pity that a very good book should be withheld from a circulation for a word; it is also a pity that a Society formed expressly for the circulation of truth, should circulate

“positive error.” How is the difficulty to be surmounted? that is the question.

If we had time and room, we should like to follow this writer (under his different signatures) and his coadjutors through their various criticisms, fully believing that few, if any of them, rest upon any just foundation. But it is impossible. Three lines are sufficient to convey an erroneous impression, which three columns cannot dissipate from all minds; and such is the number and variety of these unjust criticisms, in the 30 or 40 columns published by the Synod's Committee and their associates, that it would be hopeless, within any reasonable limits, to expose them in their true character, and still more hopeless that any considerable number of those who had read the accusations, would read also the defence. And at best, the defending party could only place himself where he stood at the outset. We therefore leave these men to the consoling reflection, if it be such to their minds, that the greater part of their misrepresentations will probably never be corrected on this side the grave. Grosser language we have met with, though even on that score the Committee have not much to boast of. Such terms as “falsification,” “mutilation,” “perversion,” and “deception,” all of which are deliberately charged upon the Publishing Committee of the Tract Society, certainly do not belong to the dialect of gentlemen,—much less of Christians. It is true the Synod's Committee disavow the purpose of charging *intentional* falsification, &c., but the exemption is based upon another imputation nearly as bad, viz. ignorance, and neglect of official duty. Some ladies had the curiosity to see how many times certain words were made use of in three of the articles of the Synod's Committee, and the result is as follows:

Falsification,	6 times
Perversion,	9 “
Mutilation,	22 “

Besides which, there is a copious sprinkling of such expressions as “blotting out the truth,” “concealment of truth,” “suppressing” the truth, “raising false issues,” “bearing false testimony,” “weak inventions of calumny,” &c. &c. Now we submit that if the Synod's Committee designed to charge no intentional wrong upon the Society or its Publishing Committee, these opprobrious epithets are out of place. It is an abuse of language so to use them. Who but a bad

man perverts, falsifies, mutilates, and deceives? Such terms imply obliquity somewhere; if it is not in the object, it must be in the vision, or medium. To call alterations, *perversions*,—omissions, *mutilations*,—and both, *falsifications*,—and to call a supposed insufficient announcement of changes, *deception*,—shows at least that the mind of him who uses such expressions, is excited and intolerant. Another man, looking at the same changes, would see in them none of these hateful characteristics.

The evidence which the Committee present in support of the charge of “perversions of the author’s aim, or meaning,” consists of certain alterations and omissions in D’Aubigne and Edwards, which we have already noticed.

In proof of the charge of “mutilation,” they appeal to the same works as published by the Tract Society, and also to Cotton Mather’s *Essays to do Good*, and Leslie’s *Short and Easy Method with Deists*. Under this head they make one sensible remark, viz., that “it would have helped the matter much, if we had been informed what it is proper to call a mutilation.” But this help would have been more timely, if the Synod’s Committee had ascertained the proper definition of the term before bringing the accusation. That omissions have been made in some works published by the Tract Society, and that in the case of Leslie and Cotton Mather they are somewhat extensive, is readily admitted. But the question is, are these omissions properly called mutilations? We say not. That is not properly mutilation which makes a thing more perfect, or more serviceable. The works of Cotton Mather contain a vast deal of excellent matter, but mingled here and there are marvellous stories, and other extravagances, which if published with the rest, would, for general circulation, destroy the usefulness of the whole. We allude particularly to his “*Magnalia*.” Moreover his writings are copiously interlarded with Latin and Greek, and other trumpery, which would not be endured at the present day even by scholars,—much less by the common reader. His *Essays to do Good* are less objectionable in these respects than his *Magnalia*; but there are portions of them which are very ill adapted for general circulation in 1845, and it would be a waste of charitable contributions to publish them. These parts, amounting in the aggregate to about 40 pages, are very properly omitted in the Tract Society’s edition, together with about 30 lines relating to infant baptism.

Leslie's Method with Deists, as originally published, including his letter to Gildon, contained not only an argument for the truth of Christianity, but what the author deemed an infallible demonstration in favor of Episcopacy. We have not room here for the evidences of this fact, but if any one doubts it he is respectfully referred to the New-York Observer of March 15th, where copious extracts from the omitted parts are given, of which a single brief specimen must here suffice.

"An Infallible Demonstration of Episcopacy."—"For which this is to be said, that it has all the four marks before mentioned, to ascertain any fact, in the concurrent testimony of all the churches, at all times; and therefore must infallibly be the government which the Apostles left upon the earth." *Supplement Letter, sec. 14.*

Now we should like to ask the Synod's Committee whether they would approve of such a work in its "entireness" being published and circulated over the land, at the expense of Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Baptists, and other anti-Episcopal denominations. It is hard that the Tract Society should be condemned for omitting passages, the insertion of which would be still more violently condemned by the same individuals. Or would they say that the Society should not have published the book at all?—a book which has probably done more to counteract infidel tendencies, than any other uninspired work extant, and the circulation of which, especially in our new settlements, is still urgently needed. The Society did not profess to publish this work entire, but distinctly stated on the title-page, that it was "re-written and condensed, in a more modern style." How is a work to be "condensed," but by alterations or omissions?

The Synod's Committee say, "To deprive a man of any of his members is 'mutilation properly so called.' * * * * To retain the greater part [of an author's work] and omit the remainder, is a mutilation." We thank the Committee for this definition. For, although we do not at all admit its correctness as applicable to books, yet it is something to know what they mean by the term. Even as applicable to the human body (which was the original use of the word) we do not think their definition entirely correct. It is essential to mutilation, that the part omitted should be an important one; and generally speaking, malicious intent is implied. When a surgeon removes a mortified or cancered limb, that limb has been *amputated*;

but should a band of robbers fall upon a man and deprive him of a leg or arm, he would have been *mutilated*; if both legs, arms, and head, he would have been *horribly* mutilated. If, however, it was desired to excite odium against the surgeon, people might say he had mutilated his patient; but this would be only a caricature,—the effect of looking simply at the loss of the limb, without reflecting that it saved the patient's life.

The case of a book is very different. If a man or an animal is mutilated, the several parts are of no value, but soon become a nuisance. Many parts of a book, on the contrary, are complete in themselves, and may be far more available in a detached form than if published in connexion with the rest of the work. A choice extract from a book is often by common consent called a gem, or beauty. Accordingly we read of the *Gems* of such an author, the *Beauties* of Shakespeare, &c., meaning the best portions of his works, detached and published by themselves.

A man or an animal is an absolute unit; and when once mutilated, can never be restored to completeness. The parts gone are gone for ever. If there were but one copy of a book in existence, then to cut out and destroy any portion of it, would be to mutilate it. In that case, the analogy between a man and a book, so far as mutilation is concerned, would be complete. But a *multiplication* of the copies of portions of it, would not be mutilation. On the contrary, it might be the means of preserving those portions, whereas otherwise the whole would have been lost. Such was probably the case with the fragments of Sappho, and other mutilated works which have come down to us from antiquity. Some individual, charmed with those fragments, caused them to be copied, and thus they were preserved, while every copy of the entire work perished. Of such a work, it would be proper to say it was mutilated; but not by the copyist of the parts preserved. He left the complete copy as he found it. He did nothing to abridge the chance of its preservation. And, but for his act, no part would have been saved. Since the invention of printing, the case is still stronger. When a work is printed, commonly not less than one thousand copies are printed. And of standard works (such only as are likely to be reprinted, either wholly or in part, by the American Tract Society,) many editions are published in the course of years, so that the aggregate number of copies is very great. Every good library

must contain one of course. There is no more danger, at this day, that any *such* work will be lost, than that the sun will be lost from the solar system. It is not in the power of governments or councils to destroy such a work, or even to mutilate it. For as copies of it in its original form become scarce, they are more carefully preserved, and more highly valued. And whenever there is any considerable demand for original copies, there are always printers and booksellers ready to republish the work in that form. Was it ever dreamed that the compilers of reading books for schools were guilty of mutilation in making selections from a hundred different works, instead of republishing some one of them entire? We never heard such a suggestion from any quarter; unless the Synod's Committee mean to take that ground, which we hardly think they do, notwithstanding the rule of invariable entireness which they laid down in their first number. Well, if it is right and proper to make an extract of 10 pages from a volume of 300 pages, with a suitable annunciation of the source, why not 20, 50, or 100 pages? Why not 150, 200, 299 pages? Perhaps the Synod's Committee can tell at what point innocent extracting ends, and mutilation begins; if they can, they would enlighten some of their readers by giving the information. It may be said they have given it already; for they assert that a work is mutilated, when the "*greater part*" of it is retained in its original proportions, and the remainder omitted. By the greater part we suppose is to be understood any thing more than half. Here then is a rule for the guidance of the American Tract Society, and all kindred institutions, as well as individuals. They may republish *HALF* of a work, or anything less, in its original proportions, without being guilty of mutilation or other offence, either against the author or the public. But if more than half, it is an outrage against both. They may republish 150 pages of the before-mentioned work of 300 pages, and nobody has a right to complain; but if they add another page, making 151 pages, they commit a "painful" act of mutilation. The absurdity of such a doctrine is too obvious to require remark. Nor can the difficulty be avoided by giving a more liberal construction to the rule; for it is impossible to conceive how 140 pages may be innocently published, while to publish 160 would be an iniquity to be punished by the judges. Right and wrong are not so near neighbors as this. If the Synod's Committee would lay down rules that will bear examination, they must have sound principles for their basis.

The fact is, *there is no such thing as the mutilation of a book by omissions fairly made and distinctly announced.* The work itself is not mutilated, because there are a plenty of complete copies existing, and it is easy to multiply them to any extent. The particular edition is not mutilated, for it contains all that it was intended to contain, all that it purports to contain, and all that it is desirable it should contain, with reference to the objects for which it was issued. When an author gives a work to the public, he places it (bating the copy right,) essentially at their disposal. They can print or read any part of it, or the whole, or none, at their pleasure. All that he can justly claim is, that a part shall not be published *as* the whole, and that passages designed to qualify other passages, shall not be omitted, while those which they were designed to qualify, are retained. The basis of this claim is, that omissions *in such a way*, would make him utter sentiments contrary to, or essentially differing from, his real sentiments. It will not do to say that the author intended every part of his work to qualify every other part, for in no proper sense is this true. When the Synod's Committee have demonstrated that we are bound to *read* or *hear* the whole of a man's thoughts upon any particular subject and its various collateral and incidental topics,—the whole or none,—they may perhaps be able to show that we are bound to print the whole or none. It might as well be claimed that we are bound to purchase the whole of a merchant's goods because we buy a part. In both cases, we may suit ourselves as to the quantity, and also as to the kind of goods. But if we divide a skein of thread, we must divide it longitudinally, and not crosswise.

It seems to us the principle is a very plain one, and involves no serious difficulty. It is one which has been practised upon from time immemorial, both by booksellers and others. College Professors omit the dirt of Virgil, Ovid, Horace, Juvenal, &c., from the editions of those works designed as class books for students, and call them "expurgated" editions. But according to the Synod's Committee they ought to be called *mutilated* editions. Dr. Worcester, Dr. Nettleton, Dr. Patton, Dr. Beman, and we know not how many other Doctors, in their editions of Watts, omit various stanzas from the hymns which they publish, and call their editions *improved*. In the case of some of them we doubt the justice of the claim, though the poet has less reason to complain of omissions than of alterations.

Fawcett "mutilates" Baxter's Saints' Rest, and thereby secures for it increased usefulness and a vast increase of circulation. Other works without number have been mutilated, according to the definition of the Synod's Committee, with manifest advantage to themselves, and benefit to the community. This kind of mutilation has been practised by other benevolent Societies,—by the London Tract Society for instance,—to full as great an extent as by the American Tract Society; and so far as we know, without a word of complaint. We are aware that the Synod's Committee attempt to make out a different result, and even have the presumption to cite Edwards on Redemption in support of their position: whereas the fact is, that while the American Tract Society have omitted but *seventy* LINES in the whole work,* (of which only 30 consist of denominational matter,) the London Society have omitted *a hundred and six* PAGES in a lump, as printed by the American Tract Society, (besides what they have omitted in other parts of the volume), extending from "The Destruction of Jerusalem" to "The Final Judgment," and including all the denominational matter omitted by the American Tract Society except the passage respecting baptism, (p. 65,) which is also omitted by the London Society. With these facts in view, compare the representations of the Synod's Committee in regard to the two editions.

Of the London Society they say,—

"They have not erased the qualification which the author gives of his definite statements of the purpose of God in the work of redemption; † they have retained the word "elect" in most of the places where it has been either blotted out or exchanged for some other term by our Publishing Committee; and are explicit in their notice of the parts omitted, both in the Preface, and also in the place where their omission begins."

Of the American Society's edition they say,—

"When for instance whole paragraphs, and even an entire section, of the 'History of Redemption,' are stricken out, what is it but a mutilation?"

* Except so much as was gained by improvements in the language, omissions of repetitions, &c. The 40 lines not denominational, were omitted near the close of the volume, to avoid the expense of an additional sheet; those lines being selected which were deemed of least importance. They have since been restored.

† Alluding to the omission by the American Tract Society of his paraphrase of a Scripture expression, particularly noticed in the former part of this article.

Would not a common reader infer from this language, that a great deal more was omitted in the American Society's edition than in the London Society's? In the former, not only "whole paragraphs," but "even an entire section," are stricken out. Most readers know what a paragraph is; it sometimes fills half a page; sometimes less; and sometimes two or three pages. More than one such portion is omitted, according to the Synod's Committee, but precisely how many is not stated. A section in many works is equivalent to a chapter. "An entire section," contrasted as it is with "whole paragraphs," implies the omission of at least a dozen or twenty pages. The only intimation by the Synod's Committee of *any* omission in the London Society's edition, is, that "notice of the parts omitted" is explicitly given. It is worthy of remark too, that the parts omitted in the American Society's edition are "*stricken out*;" while in the other they are only "*omitted*."

Now bear in mind that only 70 *lines* are omitted from the American Society's edition, except by improvements in style, &c., and 106 *pages* from the London Society's, and you have a tolerable specimen of the fairness of the Synod's Committee.

We ought perhaps to say that this illustration is introduced by the Synod's Committee under the general head of "Deception"! Not deception by the Synod's Committee, (oh no!) but by the Managers of the American Tract Society, in their prefatory announcements. Under the same head, and in illustration of the same point, they say,—

"They [the London Society] have not thrown out as much from Leslie's 'Short and Easy Method with Deists,' and their notice deceives no one.

In another place they say,—

"Leslie's 'Short and Easy Method with Deists' is said to be 're-written,' and condensed in a more modern style;" and yet in the first half of the treatise six entire pages are neither re-written nor condensed, but wholly suppressed; while all the latter part of the work is thrown away, and new matter introduced in its place."

The propriety of omitting portions of this work, on account of their sectarian bearing, and to bring the argument within a shorter compass, we have already shown. We wish now to add, that the credit of these omissions does not belong to the American Tract Society; of which fact the Synod's Committee must have been perfectly aware, when they so vehemently condemned that Society on account

of them. The American Society's edition, both as Tract No. 123, and in their volume of publications on Infidelity, is the same as the London Society's edition, except a few corrections in style, and the omission of a few lines of the notes. But we doubt if the abridgment was made even by the London Tract Society. As long ago as 1818 or 1819, (six or seven years before the American Tract Society was formed,) the writer studied Leslie as a class-book in College, very nearly, if not exactly in the same form in which it is now printed by the London Tract Society. The abridgment was preferred to the full work by the College, because it presented the argument in a more compact shape. But after the lapse of 26 years, a Committee of the Synod of New York and New Jersey, New School, have discovered that it is a horrible mutilation!

Various other statements of the Synod's Committee under the general head of "Deception in the prefatory announcements," are open to severe criticism, but we have not time nor room to expose them in their true light. We will however state a few facts relative to the publications complained of under this head, (which we have obtained from one of the Secretaries of the Society,) leaving the reader, if he sees fit, to compare them with the representations of the Synod's Committee, in which case he cannot fail to perceive upon whose heads the charge of deception would most appropriately rest. We begin with

Flavel's Touchstone and Keeping the Heart.—These works were both reprinted from editions in common circulation when the American Tract Society was formed; and the same is true of *Henry on Meekness*. The changes in all these works seem to be duly announced.

Pike's Guide to Young Disciples, now comprising 465 pages, was abridged in some less important parts to render the work more acceptable and useful; and as the author was communicated with on the subject, a notice of the abridgment was deemed unnecessary. Of this work the Synod's Committee exclaim, as with great astonishment, "Is it possible the Publishing Committee knew nothing of this?"

Wilberforce's Practical View was printed from the edition of the London Tract Society, of which 3,000 copies were circulated among the nobility of England, by the liberality of a distinguished Christian, and is announced on the title-page as "From a late London edition."

Edwards's Narrative of his own Conversion, is a Tract of 16 pages, No. 144. The narrative was found among his papers after his death; nor is it known whether he ever intended, or considered it proper, that it should be published. The Society's edition, it was judged, would be more useful to the community in general, by omitting or modifying some passages. As printed, it contains the most decided expressions of his own views on the subject of salvation. A line of substitution, which the Synod's Committee especially complain of, was inserted as a connecting link, to avoid additional abridgment. How can they say the Society "makes no announcement of the slightest change," when the title is "The Conversion of President Edwards. *From an Account written by himself.*" Had it been printed entire, the word "*From*" would naturally have been omitted.

Hannah More's *Practical Piety*, and Venn's *Duty of Man*, were revised, and a few compliments to *Episcopacy* omitted. Why do not the Synod's Committee quote as "painful instances of mutilation," the words omitted from this book, as they do what is omitted from other books where the concession is made to Episcopalians? In the *Life of Pearce*, by Fuller, with additions by his son, W. H. Pearce, his *testimony* in favor of the sentiments of *Baptists* is omitted. The Synod's Committee make no intimation of the nature of the alterations, but say, "passages are suppressed and alterations made, affecting in some cases the *doctrinal sentiments* of the writer!" Why not show up the sin of omitting what *favoured* Episcopalians and Baptists, as well as what opposed them in D'Aubigné and Edwards?

In Harris's "*Mammon*" a few phrases that had been complained of (especially by the Princeton Review) as implying such an independence in man, as conflicted with the sovereignty of God, were changed in the stereotype plates of the second edition, and so announced. Yet the Synod's Committee, so high Calvinists when criticising other books, here mourn over an alteration in the author's "doctrinal sentiments"!

Flavel's Fountain of Life was reprinted from the London Tract Society's edition, but first compared throughout with Flavel's works, pruned of redundancies and whatever seemed to lie in the reader's way, and no pains was spared to render it worthy of permanent circulation. The great acceptance it has gained with sound evangelical

Christians, is sufficient proof that this labor was not spent in vain. The book now comprises 560 pages 12mo. If the Synod's Committee think the great body of readers, and themselves also, would be more edified by retaining every syllable just as Flavel wrote it, with the nearly "400 notes," many of them in the dead languages, we hope they will by some means have it printed in that form. The learned theologian has in Flavel's works the treatise entire.—The same remarks, essentially, may be applied to *Owen on Forgiveness*.

An announcement of the changes in Henry's "*Church in the House*," we learn, was omitted through inadvertence.

The reader will please bear in mind that the above mentioned works have been selected by the Synod's Committee as the most available for their purpose, which could be found. They have made a great ado about "deception in the Society's prefatory announcements;" but we think the reader is by this time convinced, that if there is any deception in the case, the Synod's Committee are its authors.

Equally unfounded is the charge which they bring against the Tract Society or its Publishing Committee, of "falsifying history." The proofs which they adduce, are the best evidence of this. Their *meaning*, however, is not so erroneous as their language. When they speak of falsifying history, they only mean that a historical fact, or series of facts, has been omitted; or perchance that the form of expression or shade of thought has been changed, while the leading idea is retained. And by history they mean any thing that has been thought, said, written, or done, in time past. Accordingly they instance Cotton Mather's "parental resolutions;" and ask if it is a historical fact that he framed such resolutions in which no allusion was made to infant baptism! So in the case of any book on any subject,—they might ask if it is not a historical fact that the author wrote what he did write; and thence conclude that to omit or alter any part of it would be a "falsification of history." We do not believe that intelligent men can be humbugged in this way. And what if it were history? Can nothing of history be omitted, under any circumstances? If a man publishes only a description of the battle of Waterloo, is he guilty of falsifying history, because he does not give the particulars of the whole campaign? If he wishes to exhibit the achievements of some particular regiment or individual, is he guilty of

falsifying history because he omits all other details of the battle? Or suppose he should omit *only* personal incidents and achievements, publishing all the rest of the history; what rights of the public would be invaded thereby? What falsification of history would there be? If the public preferred the complete work, they could have it; if they preferred the "mutilated" work, they could have that.

We know of nothing which gives to history any inviolability in this respect, that is not common to all other writings. Doubtless history should not be falsified,—there is no difference of opinion on this point; doubtless, as in all other departments of literature, great care should be taken to present the true meaning of the writer; and doubtless the safest way in all ordinary cases, is to give his thoughts in his own language. This is what the American Tract Society have done. That is, they have done it in ordinary cases; and in all cases, unless there appeared to be some good reason for a departure from the rule. They have not, indeed, considered themselves an Antiquarian Society, but rather a Society for the *selection* of such works or *parts* of works, old or new, or the procuring of such works to be written, as might seem best adapted for general usefulness; making emendations in obvious cases, and giving notice of the fact on the title-page or in an introductory note. To all this we see no objection.

The Synod's Committee make one admission, which, coming from the source it does, is worthy of notice, viz., that the American Tract Society have not diluted or obscured "the great foundation truths of the Gospel in which evangelical Christians agree." *That* is something, to say the least; for it narrows down the whole controversy, so far as this matter is concerned, to sectarian peculiarities. These, the Synod's Committee say, "are diluted or obscured, to adapt them to the basis of denominational union. * * We say not that the Publishing Committee should publish such doctrines, but we protest against the wrong done to an author, *in casting out from his work* doctrinal statements of such a character. It cannot be done without great injury to his work. If such passages cannot be retained, the book must be left to other channels of publication." Here, we suppose, is the key to the whole movement. One of the most distinguished men in New England, on being asked, soon after the Synod's Committee opened their batteries, what he thought of the matter,

said, "it looked to him as though a bookseller was at the bottom of it." Certain booksellers, we learn, have been very active in supplying ammunition, but the leading impulse, we are well convinced, sprung from sectarianism. It was seen that the American Tract Society was sending abroad millions upon millions of Tracts and books, which, although containing every thing else that could be desired, were silent in regard to Infant Baptism, Episcopacy, &c. To men who made hobbies of these points of controversy, (which have been agitated for ages without any profitable result,) it was "painful" to see the world supplied with pure Gospel, unattended by such appendages. To be sure, books upon Baptism, Episcopacy, &c., continued to be issued through "other channels," but comparatively few would read them; while the publications of the American Tract Society went every where, and were read by every body. What was to be done in this dilemma? Plainly the influence of the Tract Society must be curtailed. But whether the attack should be made avowedly on sectarian grounds, or directed against the colporteur system, or the volume circulation, or some other feature of the Society's operations, was not so clear. It finally took the form which has been seen. If the confidence of the community could be shaken in regard to the Society's publications; if the impression could be produced that they were "mutilated," their meaning "perverted," history "falsified," the public "deceived," and most important truths "diluted or obscured," sectarianism could more easily maintain its ground, and denominational Tracts would stand a better chance to be circulated and read. It is worthy of remark, that three of the five members of the Synod's Committee were also appointed on a Committee relative to the formation of a *denominational Board of Publication*; and also respecting the establishment of a new paper "to promote the interests of Constitutional Presbyterianism." Similar committees were appointed by the New School Synod of Pennsylvania, a few days subsequently. Also a series of resolutions were passed, one of which is as follows:

"Resolved, That a committee be appointed to consider the propriety of memorializing the next General Assembly on the subject of establishing a Board of Publication, or something equivalent thereto, for the purpose of securing the reprinting or publication of such works as may promote the peculiar principles of the church to which we belong."

Rev. Dr. Eddy, (a member of the Synod's Committee,) who at-

tended the session of the Pennsylvania Synod, remarked, on the same occasion, that *the course pursued by the American Tract Society* "rendered it necessary that some mode of publication should be resolved upon which would give to the Presbyterian community *the peculiar doctrines of that denomination*, and prevent the mutilation of works to suit the views of other sects." Putting that and that together, there would seem to be ground for believing that the horror of the Synod's Committee on account of alleged "mutilations," &c., was not altogether a horror of principle; but, as another has well expressed it, a denominational wail in a neutral camp. Had their object been *general*, viz., the protection of the rights of authors, and of the public in reference to their works, it would not have been difficult to lay down *general rules* applicable to the case. But to lay down general rules applicable to a *particular* case, without extending to other cases which it is designed to except, is not so easy. In their first article, the Synod's Committee say—

"The feelings of the community, if we mistake not, will demand, that if books be published by the Society, they be published *entire*, and that this shall be the invariable rule. If this is not done in future, the Society, we apprehend, will look in vain to the churches for their sympathy and co-operation."

Universal, definite rules, are a great convenience; rules which admit of no exception,—"*invariable*," like the laws of the Medes and Persians. Such, at first, was the rule prescribed by the Synod's Committee for "*reforming into necessary righteousness*" the American Tract Society. But in the course of six weeks, new light burst in upon their understandings, and in their second number, published near the close of December, they say—

"The complaints respect simply the *acts* of the Publishing Committee in altering books which are the common property of Christendom, and the bulwarks of evangelical truth. The points at issue, therefore, in the present case, are not the manner in which the Committee have acted in this matter, nor is it that the Publishing Committee may not make such changes in an author as will remove whatever is quaint, obsolete, or even antiquated in his phraseology, provided the exact meaning of the author is retained, and with equal clearness and force, in the substitution; nor is it that they may not make and publish an abridgment of any work; nor is it that they may not obtain the consent of living authors to make such changes in their works as they may wish. Nor is it that we wish them to publish the ecclesiastical

or doctrinal peculiarities of any denomination ; nor is it yet that we wish them to do the work of sectarianism in any form whatever. No such things are desired."

Here goes the "invariable entire" rule,—which, it now appears, is liable to many exceptions. The Committee mean nothing by it, inconsistent with altering an author's language, or abridging his work,—whatever may be the extent of that abridgment. And all this may be done by the Publishing Committee of the American Tract Society. "The complaints" of the gentlemen "respect simply the *acts* of the Publishing Committee, * * * * * not the manner in which the Committee have acted." We hope, after this, no one will be so stupid as to misunderstand their meaning. They complain of the *acts* of the Publishing Committee—not of the manner in which that Committee *have acted*!—Can any thing be plainer? But mark ye, there must be no "mutilation." The abridgment must "contain the meaning of the original, though in *less* compass and fewer words." And what are we to understand by the "meaning of the original?" Must the abridgment contain the *whole* meaning of the original,—all the thoughts and shades of thought,—all the facts, opinions and reasonings? In the case of a work materially reduced, this would be utterly impossible. Yet to admit the principle of permitting the "suppression" of any of an author's thoughts, opinions, facts or reasonings, would be to abandon the controversy. Therefore, in their third document, published about the end of January, the Synod's Committee, having had time to get their ideas into shape, (a thing which might as well have been done before they commenced the attack,) resort to metaphorical language for the expression of an idea which cannot be expressed in plain English without betraying its absurdity. They say—

"4. There is no objection to such changes being made by the Society in an author, as will remove whatever is quaint, obsolete, or even antiquated in his phraseology, provided his meaning be retained with equal clearness and force in the substitution ; nor is there any objection to its making and publishing an abridgment of any work, provided such abridgment be a faithful miniature likeness of the original ; and that full and explicit notice be given in the books, of the changes made in them.

"5. While, therefore, we approve of the Society's procuring books to be written for it, in accordance with the principles of its Constitution, and of its publishing, unaltered, books already in circulation, which its principles will permit, *we do object to the alteration of books so as to suit the basis of this*

union. All that is asked here is, that if the Publishing Committee cannot agree to publish them as they are, they will let them entirely alone."

In this third and last modification of the "invariably entire" rule, abridgments are allowed, provided they are "a faithful miniature likeness of the original." Otherwise not. A "faithful miniature likeness" exhibits every feature and lineament of the original on a reduced scale. In dealing with matter, this, within certain limits, is practicable; because matter is a fixed quantity, capable, in theory, of infinite divisibility, and actually, of divisibility to extreme minuteness. But in the world of mind, the case is otherwise. There is no such thing as "a miniature likeness" of an author's ideas, considered in detail, but speaking of them *en masse*, the expression might be tolerated. But is this the meaning of the Synod's Committee? If so, it is equivalent to saying (poetry apart), that an abridgment should present the general scope and bearing of the original; should contain the author's leading thoughts, plan, and purpose,—omitting subordinate, secondary, collateral thoughts, so far as is necessary to contract the work to the requisite dimensions, but *reducing the whole on a uniform scale, one part as much as another*. This last is the peculiarity of the Synodical theory, so far as abridgments are concerned, and it borders so closely upon the ridiculous, that we do not believe it would ever have been seriously thought of, were it not for the manifest inconsistency of allowing "mutilations" and not allowing them. According to this rule, an abridgment, in order to be justifiable, must contain the blotches, as well as the beauties of the original, though on a reduced scale. If Cotton Mather tells a big story about a ship in the air, the abridgment must contain a little story about a ship in the air. If Baxter, in the original of the "Saints' Rest," says, "Witches will make a man dance naked, or do the most unseemly, unreasonable actions," the abridgment must say so too, or something like it.

Suppose the Am. Tract Society should find it expedient to prepare an 18mo. edition of Webster's great Dictionary; and suppose they could do it without infringement upon the copy-right. How would the rule of the Synod's Committee be applied to this case? Of course, no word could be omitted from the *vocabulary*, for this would be to "strike out" a feature of the original,—a feature as prominent as any other in the book. In other words, according to the dialect of the Synod's Committee, it would be "mutilation." It would also, ac-

according to the same dialect, be a “falsification of history;” for we ask, is it not a historical fact, that Webster inserted every word which he did insert, and annexed to it every definition which he did annex?—Now the omission of any word or definition, would be a wilful “suppression” of this fact. It might also be a “perversion” of the author’s meaning, (for it is impossible to know what words or definitions he deemed most essential to the integrity of the work,) and it is obvious that inserting one or two definitions of a word, and omitting the rest, is giving an imperfect view, perhaps we might say a one-sided view, of the meaning of the writer. Again, it would be a “deception” practised upon the mind of the reader; for he could not know, from any thing contained in the abridgment, what particular words or definitions had been omitted. To say on the title-page, “Condensed” or “Abridged from the quarto edition,” would not answer the purpose; for it would only imply that something or other had been omitted, without intimating what. The only way to avoid the difficulty entirely, would be, to insert the words and definitions omitted, *in the places where they were omitted*, and give a general notice of the fact in an introductory note! This, we presume, would be satisfactory to the Synod’s Committee.

By this illustration we wish to show the utter impossibility, in many cases, of abridging a work so as to present minutely, and uniformly, the features of the original; and in proportion to the extent of the abridgment is the difficulty increased. If the author was a compact writer, he presented his thoughts in as small a compass as another man can do it. Consequently, if his work is to be abridged one half, about one half of his thoughts, or modifications of the same, must be omitted. And as we said before, it is often better,—better for the reader, and better for the reputation of the author,—to omit the least important portions of the work outright, rather than attempt to reduce every thing, good, bad and indifferent, in a uniform ratio. The only proper rule is, to refer the whole matter to the judgment of him who undertakes the abridgment. If he is incompetent to the task, arbitrary rules will not make him competent. The remedy, in such a case, is to be found in substituting some better, or more laborious, or more skilful man.

If, for any reason, the reader were obliged to reduce his dwelling to one half its present dimensions, would he necessarily, in altering or

rebuilding on the reduced scale, retain the same number of rooms, bedrooms, pantries, closets, &c., as before? Would he reduce his doors, windows and cat-hole, his bedsteads, chairs and tables, in the same proportion? Or might he not deem it better to diminish the *number* of rooms, &c., for the sake of having them of a convenient, or at least an available size? The rule of the Synod's Committee [reduction in a uniform ratio] would not be a whit more absurd in this case, than in its application to books. How would an author, how does an author, abridge his own book, when an abridgment is demanded by public convenience? How did Webster abridge his dictionary? How do other men abridge their own works? On the "uniform ratio" principle? By no means. On the contrary, they retain various portions of their works entire, and omit other portions entire, according to their estimate of the value of each. Another class of paragraphs, being of medium value and importance, they reduce by the omission of such *sentences* as can be spared without deducting materially from the general thought; or they endeavor to express the idea in fewer words. The course which authors pursue in abridging their own works, is the course they would wish to *have* pursued, if the task should be left to other hands. An author who knows he has written a work of sterling merit, is naturally fond of having it circulated and read. A *good* man, who has written a work that he thinks will *do* good, has an additional and still stronger motive for wishing it extensively circulated. If in order to this, it is necessary to omit certain paragraphs, unessential to the main design of the work, he will readily consent to it. There is no difficulty in obtaining the consent of living authors to such omissions, as numerous examples prove, which have occurred within the experience of the American Tract Society. It is stated in the Address of the Publishing Committee, that although more than forty volumes and numerous Tracts have been published by the Society while the authors yet lived, (who have been consulted as far as possible,) no one of them is known to have complained that his meaning had been perverted. The late Dr. Nelson, to whom was submitted the Society's revision of his "Cause and Cure of Infidelity," was so much pleased with it, that he expressed a particular desire that this edition, rather than the original, should be sent to France for republication in that country. Is it not reasonable then to conclude that it is strictly conformable to the will of *deceased* authors, to omit, for the

purposes of the Society, such portions of their works, not essential to their main design, as would stand in the way of general circulation? The American Tract Society, through their Publishing Committee, are the Executors of such authors for the purposes mentioned. They are bound to take no liberties with their works which they would not be willing should be taken with their own in similar circumstances; or which, judging from the conduct of living authors, and the general character and views of the deceased, there is not reason to believe would be approved by the latter if living. With these rules for their guidance, the Publishing Committee are not likely to go far astray. Some of them are authors themselves. The senior Secretary has had one of his own works (the Life of Harlan Page) "mutilated" by the London Tract Society, that it might be better adapted for usefulness in the new sphere which it was designed to occupy. And think you, good reader, did it greatly distress the author to see his work go "mutilated" through the length and breadth of the United Kingdom, and more or less over every other part of the known world?—Did he not rather rejoice and bless God, that he had been made the honored instrument of presenting the Christian example of Page before so many thousands and millions of his fellow-men, not only in this country, but in Europe and Asia? And would not every good man rejoice to have his works thus "mutilated," and himself too, if necessary, for such an object? How little and mean in comparison, would appear a punctilious regard to absolute entireness, or any such trifle! We say trifle, for such in truth it is. It is of very little consequence, in any point of view, whether an edition of a work published by the American Tract Society, is absolutely entire or not. The public do not look to such Institutions for literary niceties, but for important truths; pearls, gems and diadems, in whatever literary frame they may be set. It cannot be expected that *the best* will be obtained without some culling. If there is any danger that old standard works, in the exact form in which they were written, will become extinct, it may be proper for those who appreciate the value of absolute entireness, to co-operate for their preservation. And were even the Synod's Committee to undertake such an enterprise, they would be better employed, than in clogging the wheels of the chariot of salvation, because Sectarianism is not permitted to ride.

The omission of portions of particular works, and the alteration of

a particular class of expressions, is no new thing ; but has been practised from the very foundation of the Society. Edwards on Redemption has been in circulation by the Society about eight years ; his Account of his own Conversion, nearly twenty years ; Leslie's Short Method with Deists, twelve or fifteen years ; and various other works complained of by the Synod's Committee, a greater or less number of years. How is it that all this delinquency escaped observation until 1844 ? Had not the Synod's Committee read the books before ? Had not other ministers and intelligent laymen read them,—who would be keen to detect and prompt to complain of any manifest wrong or impropriety in the course of the Publishing Committee ? Why, then, was not the discovery made long ago ? The reason is, we fancy, that the vision of certain men has become keener as they have grown older : they can now see not only every thing that exists, but much that does not exist,—“gorgons and hydras, and chimeras dire.” Looking through the Synod Committee's spectacles, and trusting to the accuracy of their observations, many good men and women have been alarmed, supposing that the Tract Society had really been doing something wrong, or at least been guilty of great indiscretions. Such was the case, at first, with members of the Boston Tract Society, and even of its Executive Committee. But instead of taking upon trust the representations of the Synod's Committee, they determined to know the certainty of the things whereof these gentlemen affirmed, and for this purpose sent a delegation of six members to New-York, who, after an interview of three days with the Executive Committee of the Parent Institution,—during which they probed every doubtful point with the thoroughness, though without the discourtesy, of a lawyer examining the witnesses of the opposite party,—came to the unanimous conclusion “that the several denominations composing the Society will require of the Publishing Committee, *that they still pursue substantially their present plan of publication.*” [See Address of the Boston Committee, p. 15.] Among those who concurred in this sentiment, were the two members represented by the Synod's Committee to have visited Springfield as “a Delegation from the Boston Committee,” (whereas they came solely on their own responsibility,) and there to have assented to the principles embodied in the rules above quoted from the third document of the Synod's Committee, viz., that unless books can be published entire by the Society, they must not be published

at all; and that no work must be abridged unless in a uniform ratio; or as the Committee express it, unless it is "a faithful miniature likeness of the original." In a card signed by the Secretary of the Boston Society, the two gentlemen express their "surprise and grief" at the representations made by the Synod's Committee in regard to that interview, (which was designed to be strictly confidential,) and remark that "their views on the whole subject are fully expressed in the address of the [Boston] Executive Committee."

We will now consider, for a moment, the *effect* which the adoption of the Synod Committee's rules by the Am. Tract Society, would have upon its interests and usefulness. That Committee express their entire approbation of the basis of the Society's union, viz., the publishing of only those truths in which evangelical denominations agree; but they say, "we do object to the alteration of books to suit the basis of this union." And again, if passages relating to denominational peculiarities "cannot be retained, the book must be left to other channels of publication." This restriction would exclude from publication by the Society, a large number of their most useful volumes and Tracts, such as Wilberforce's Practical View (E); Hannah More's Practical Piety (E); Baxter's Call, Saints' Rest, Dying Thoughts, and Life; Flavel's Fountain of Life, Method of Grace, Touchstone, and Keeping the Heart; Venn's Complete Duty of Man (E); Bishop Hall's Contemplations on the Old and New Testaments (E); Pike's Persuasives to Early Piety (B); Guide to Young Disciples (B), and Religion and Eternal Life (B); Fuller's Backslider (B); Memoir of Henry Martin (E); Buchanan's Life and Researches (E); Doddridge's Rise and Progress; Mason's Spiritual Treasury; Alleine's Alarm; Life of John Newton (E); Watson's Reply to Gibbon and Paine (E); Edwards on the Affections, and his History of Redemption; Memoir of Samuel Pearce (B); Life of Kilpin (B); Bogue's Essay; Jay's Morning Exercises; Lyttleton's Conversion of St. Paul (E); Leslie's Method with Deists (E); Henry on Meekness, and his Church in the House; Mather's Essays to do Good, &c. Under the restriction of the Synod's Committee, the works marked (E) must be surrendered to the Episcopalians for circulation, as they may be enabled to do it; those marked (B) to the Baptists, who might also claim Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, and his Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners,—and the residue to Congregationalists, Presbyterians, &c. Indeed, a large pro-

portion, numerically, of all the religious works published, especially those of a doctrinal character, contain more or less allusion to denominational peculiarities. But the *amount* of denominational matter in each, is not so great as would be generally imagined. It is believed that not exceeding *one page* of such matter has been omitted from any one volume published by the Am. Tract Society, except D'Aubigné; in very few cases does it exceed half a page; and in several it is only a few lines. There is nothing in the peculiar structure of this Society, as representing various evangelical denominations, which would exclude any other description of matter. [Yet on other grounds, common to all Societies which aim to circulate only the truth, whether denominational or not, certain passages in almost all the old works require to be omitted.] It is then for the sake of a page, or less, in each volume, that the works of some of the greatest and best men the world ever saw, are to be excluded from circulation by a Society whose endorsement would give them currency among all denominations in the land, and restricted to such circulation as can be given them by booksellers or denominational Boards! Verily, if this be a specimen of the wisdom of the children of light, the children of the world are much wiser.

Admit, if you please, that the matter excluded is important; yet what is that to the purpose, if by excluding such matter, you would prevent the volumes from being generally circulated? Doubtless the reputation for integrity and impartiality which the American Tract Society has earned by twenty years good behavior, would enable it to smuggle off a few editions containing denominational matter, if it were capable of such baseness, which happily it is not; but neither by denominational Boards, nor by the American Tract Society, could a general, promiscuous circulation of such matter be secured to any great extent. For, the moment a Society assumes a sectarian character and is known as such,—instead of meeting every where the kind looks and friendly co-operation of other denominations, it encounters on every side, distrust and opposition. The irreligious as well as the religious oppose it; for although there is, in almost every mind, a general conviction of the truth of religion, and its importance, yet there is no such conviction of the importance of sectarian peculiarities. If a Society or individual approaches them with the single and only desire to make them Christians, they respect such a Society or individual, and receive his message kindly, whether they heed it

or not. But go to them with a denominational flag flying, and they tell you they care nothing for your Presbyterianism, or Congregationalism, or Episcopacy, or whatever the denomination may be,—for that being one or the other, will neither make them better nor worse. And there is much truth in what they say. Hence it follows, that the *only* way to secure a general, promiscuous circulation of the volumes in question, is by omitting the small fraction of denominational matter which they contain. If the Synod's Committee think there is any other way, let them try it. They will soon find whether they can reach the millions, by the road they propose, or not. If it be admitted that they cannot, then we ask, are they prepared to take the responsibility of, in effect, withholding the invaluable works of Baxter, Flavel, Pike, Leslie, Wilberforce, Edwards, Newton, &c., from the mass of our population, on account of a literary or religious punctilio? Can they vindicate such a course before the bar of their own consciences? We do not see how.

But it may be said there are other good works which the Tract Society can circulate, not liable to these objections. So there are; and there are other good poets besides Milton and Shakspeare. To drop the latter from the department of poetry, would not be a worse "mutilation" than to "strike out" the works of the above mentioned authors from the department of Christian theology. Either would be wholesale butchery compared with any thing which the American Tract Society have done. There is as much difference between the two cases, as between omitting a page, (perchance a few lines only,) and the whole work. We were greatly surprised to see in the last New Englander, a suggestion from a source entitled to much respect, that although there may be "a necessity for a while, at least, that books already written should be adapted by alterations to the Society's purposes," yet the time may soon come when such works can properly give place to new ones, written expressly for the Society, and "better adapted" to its wants. We dissent from this proposition *in toto*. Nothing can be better adapted to the Society's purposes than some of the works above mentioned, after the slight deductions which have been made from them, of denominational matter. They are in fact perfect in their kind, and can no more be replaced by new works, than Milton and Shakspeare can be. Compare such works (the choicest products of centuries) with the

works of a single generation, for whatever purpose written, and it may be said in general, "the old are better." But we want both. And should the American Tract Society be so "reformed into necessary righteousness" as to exclude the old authors from its list of publications,—to shut the mouths of those great and good men who would fain have preached to all denominations in all ages, and might have done so but for this wretched "reform,"—we do not hesitate to say that a new Society would be immediately organized, to do the work renounced by the old. The Christian public are too much attached to those volumes to permit them to be abandoned to "channels" of circulation through which they cannot pass. They not only wish to read them themselves, but to have them read by every body else; and will therefore be slow to consent to a course which would restrict them to one denomination, and *that* the very denomination which does not need the sectarian portions of them, being already firm in the same opinions. If, however, individuals are wavering, and require to be plied with new arguments, or re-plied with old, in order to keep them within the pale of their present communion, there are a plenty of works at command, far better adapted to *that* purpose than any of those above mentioned.

Why do not gentlemen consider, that even after the strictly sectarian portions of a work are withdrawn, there still remains a general influence favorable to the denomination to which the writer belonged? All his thoughts and shades of thought are at least consistent with his denominational views,—and more is liable to be true, through the oversight or liberality of the Publishing Committee. Those denominations, therefore, which at first blush would seem to have most reason to complain, are in truth those which are most highly favored. And, we are ashamed to add, those which are most highly favored, are the first to complain. From the foundation of the Society, all its Secretaries have been Presbyterians or Congregationalists. A large part of its publications were written by Presbyterians or Congregationalists. Its very existence, unconnected with ecclesiastical bodies, is a concession to Congregationalism; or, at least, an encroachment upon high-churchism. Each of those denominations has from the first been ably represented in the Publishing Committee. The Presbyterians have *two* members on that Committee; one representing the Old School, the other the New. The aggregate number is six. One half of the Publishing Committee, therefore, consists of Presby-

terians and Congregationalists. Whom can these denominations trust, if not Drs. Alexander, M'Auley, and Edwards? To whom especially, could the Congregationalists more safely confide the reputation of their theological giant, the author of the works on the Will, Affections, Redemption, &c., than to his worthy descendant on the Publishing Committee?

From what has been said, it is obvious that scarcely any rules can be laid down for the guidance of the Publishing Committee, which will not admit of exceptions; nor do we think it desirable that they should be much hampered in this way. If the members of the Society, after due reflection, are clear that any particular rule ought to be *uniformly* observed, and that the Publishing Committee will be more safely guided by instructions, than by their own wisdom and experience, aided by such suggestions as they may receive from agents, clergymen, and other friends of the cause, by all means let the rule be prescribed. But let nothing be done without mature reflection. The effects of haste the reader has seen in the disasters of the Synod's Committee. Let the members of the Society take warning from this example. We should say, however,

1. That the consent of living authors should in all cases be obtained, to such changes as the Publishing Committee may think it desirable to make. This rule, it appears, has been uniformly observed hitherto, except in a single instance.

2. Works which contain any considerable amount of denominational matter should be left to other channels of publication. This rule has been duly observed by the Publishing Committee, as appears from the fact that they have issued no work except D'Aubigne, from which more than about a page of such matter has been excluded. From D'Aubigne, about four pages, in a work of 1300 pages; or something less than a third of one per cent.

3. All changes should be judiciously made. It is hardly necessary to publish such a rule as this; for nobody does, or ever did, or will, question its correctness. From the best knowledge we possess of the alterations and omissions made by the American Tract Society, we believe that as a whole, if not without exception, they have been judiciously made, having reference to the basis of the Society's union, and its greatest usefulness. There could be no better evidence of this, than the fact that the Synod's Committee, after all their re-

searches, have been able to discover so very little *real* ground of complaint, although their field of observation extended over a period of 20 years, and about 1000 different publications. What other Publishing Institution in the world could pass through *such* an ordeal so little scathed?

4. In no case make such changes as will pervert the author's meaning, distort his facts, or obscure his main design. This, too, is an obvious principle of justice. Yet, like the preceding, it never can be so applied, taking a series of cases together, as to command the assent of all minds. The reason is, that men's judgments and opinions differ. Prejudice has a mighty influence upon both. What one considers judicious, another would regard as very injudicious. What one considers harmless in its bearing upon an author's meaning, facts, and main design, another may think perverts them all. It is therefore to be presumed, that however honestly, faithfully, and justly, these rules are applied, individuals will be dissatisfied, and complain. It is as if a parish should appoint a committee to construct a parsonage. They might be the best men in the place, and best acquainted with the proper style and manner of building. Yet when the work was done, how many of the parishioners would be in all respects pleased with the building? Some would object to the pitch of the roof; others, that the frame was not set high enough from the ground; others, that the rooms were too high or too low, too many or too few; that there were not enough closets; that the stairway was too wide or too narrow, &c. &c. But the house after all, might be admirably well constructed, and better than if it had been intrusted to any other men in the parish. It might be perfect in the matters most complained of. So in the case before us. The responsible duties of the Publishing Committee must be intrusted to somebody; and when the best are selected for the station—when they have done all that men could do, to discharge their duties conscientiously and wisely, it is probable they will hear more censure than praise. A book is the last thing in the world, about which uniformity of opinion is to be expected. A man cannot always satisfy himself in such matters: how then can he hope to please every body else,—men of differing tastes, sentiments and pursuits?

5. When changes are made, the fact should be distinctly announced in the work itself. By which we do not mean, that the passages

omitted should be inserted in another part of the volume, for they might as well have remained where they were. The notice should however inform the reader as to the extent and general character of the changes, and it would not be amiss to indicate the pages where they occur. If the notices heretofore given by the American Tract Society are not sufficiently explicit, it is easy to make them more so in time to come. The very name and imprint of the Society are a notification to the reader, that he is not to look to its publications for denominational matter of any sort, and that if such matter existed in the original works, it has, in the Society's edition, been purposely omitted. But in addition to this, there might be a general memorandum inserted at the beginning of each volume or Tract, stating the basis of the Society's union, and its course of procedure in regard to denominational matter. In works where considerable changes had been made, a more specific notice might be given. There is no objection to all this, on the part of the officers and managers of the Society, we are persuaded. Their notices hitherto have been such as they deemed sufficient,—and more explicit, in general, than those of many other publishers. But they can be made still more so if required. What was deemed in 1836 a sufficient notice, by one of the most active promoters of the present movement, may be seen by the following extract from the preface of Messrs. Patton & Hastings' *Christian Psalms* :—

“Watts' version is of course made the basis of the compilation, and in revising his psalms and hymns, the various readings have been carefully compared with an original English copy, containing his own notes and observations.”

This is the only notice given of very numerous alterations and omissions, unless the statement that “palpable blemishes have been removed,” and “the compilers have not dared to sacrifice sense to sound,” is an additional notice.

The above rules are all that we think it necessary to mention, and they are about equivalent to submitting the whole matter to the judgment of the Publishing Committee. For ourselves, we would willingly trust it there. For we doubt if six men could be found, in the various denominations represented in the American Tract Society, more worthy of entire confidence and esteem, than those who for so long a period, and so laboriously and faithfully, without any pecuniary reward,

have discharged the duties of that Committee. Six men, did we say ? Alas ! one of their number, the venerable Dr. Milnor, is no longer here ; he has gone to his reward. He is beyond the reach of suspicion, misrepresentation, and uncharitableness. Although habitually cautious in his expressions, they who had access to the secret chambers of his soul, know full well that he deeply felt the injustice and unreasonableness of the course pursued by the Synod's Committee. Having been Chairman both of the Publishing and Executive Committees from the very origin of the Institution, and having personally and carefully examined the different publications of the Society before they were issued, he was able to estimate the strictures of the Synod's Committee at their true value. Yet nobly did his Christian spirit rise above the promptings of selfishness ; and instead of saying, or feeling, that if such was to be the requital of his toil, he would abandon the work to others who might deem themselves better qualified for its performance, he declared at the close of the long interview with the Boston delegation, during which the objects, history, trials, prospects, and results of the enterprise were carefully considered, that although he *had* felt that his numerous other duties might at his advanced age require him to retire from his connexion with the Publishing Committee, yet "the attention he had now been called to give to the importance and usefulness of the Society, had determined his mind, that if his further services were required, he could not withhold them." This he said under the pressure of emotions which embarrassed his utterance. In about two months afterwards, he was called to more exalted services, in the world of light.

We will now notice two or three statements of the Synod's Committee relating to collateral topics. They say in their fourth document,—

"The question is asked, 'Why should the Society be held up to odium, as if convicted of a crime ?' If there be those who have complained of *the Society*, objected to it, or assailed it, we know them not. We have never done it."

An examination of the Committee's documents will show, that their complaints were at first directed against the *Society*, and afterwards against the *Publishing Committee*. In the introduction to their first document, signed J. W. M'Lane, they are denominated a Committee "on the subject of the mutilation of books by the *American*

Tract Society.” In the same document we read of “alterations made by *the Society.*” And again, “the omissions and mutilations in D’Aubigne are not the only ones, we believe, that have been made by *the Society.*” They also speak of “the position taken by *the Society,* in its notices.” They ask, “Why did not *the Society* introduce at once the ‘three orders’ of ‘bishops, priests and deacons’?” And again, “How does *the Society* know that?” “Will *the Tract Society* tell the public what are the external, and what are the internal ordinances of the church?” Every thing, in short, was done by *the Society.* The Publishing Committee are but once mentioned in the document, (near its close,) where it is said the public will hold them responsible.

In the second and subsequent documents, every thing is done by the *Publishing Committee.* The Society does nothing.

The Synod’s Committee had a perfect right to change their point of attack if they chose. But after having charged *the Society* with the “mutilation of books,” and with “taking unwarrantable liberties,”* then to say they have never “complained of the Society; objected to it, or assailed it,” is going, we think, a little too far.

The Publishing Committee, in their address to the supporters and friends of the Society, say,—

“It seems necessary to state that *no complaint whatever has been made directly to the Publishing Committee.* They would gladly have facilitated all fair and candid investigation, and shown the reasons for all their proceedings, by which satisfaction might have been given, and the painful spectacle of public collision in respect to the cause of Christian benevolence avoided; but they have had the sorrow to meet strictures on their proceedings first in the columns of the public journals, where injury cannot be retrieved, and the correction of errors may involve the Society in controversy.”

To this the Synod’s Committee reply,—

“We affirm that complaints have been made “*directly* to the Publishing Committee.” Desirous of bringing our complaints directly to this Commit-

* That there may be no misunderstanding here, we copy so much of the Synod Committee’s language as is necessary to show that they charged the “unwarrantable liberties” upon the Society, and not upon the Publishing Committee.—The latter had not been mentioned.

“Here are unwarrantable liberties. For *pastors,* we have *apostles* and *teachers,* and ‘with divine prerogatives,’ instead of ‘peculiar privileges in the sight of the Lord.’ Why did not the Society introduce at once the ‘three orders’ of ‘bishops, priests and deacons?’”

tee, but to do it in the presence of the whole Executive Committee, the responsible officers of the Society, of which Executive Committee the Publishing Committee form a constituent part, we sought and obtained, on Monday, December 2, an interview with the Executive Committee of the Society, the President of the Society being in the chair. That interview was extended through more than *four* hours, during which we frankly stated our difficulties, and asked if any change was to be expected in the future policy of the Publishing Committee. We intended that our complaints should be made to the highest Executive authority in the Society, and in the most direct manner. And we are utterly at a loss to know how to reconcile their recent statement with these facts."

Admitting all this to be so, what is it but an acknowledgment that they made their appeal to the public *before* they either had or sought an interview with the Publishing Committee? That interview was held, they say, on the 2d of December; whereas their first appeal to the public was contained in the Evangelist and Observer of Nov. 7th and 9th,—nearly a month previous.

True, the Publishing Committee use the word "has;" which, by a strict interpretation of language, would cover all the period prior to the date of their Address, Feb. 17th. But why should the Synod's Committee avail themselves of this circumstance to avoid the real point at issue,—in regard to which they knew the Publishing Committee were correct,—and then flatly contradict that Committee on a collateral point, as if it were the main one? Though it were true that the Synod's Committee sought and obtained an interview with the Publishing Committee on the 2d of December, it would be nothing to the purpose; for by what logic or legerdemain can an act be justified by an occurrence which took place *subsequently* to that act?

But this is not the worst of the case. The Synod Committee's statement clearly implies that the *Publishing Committee*, who "form a constituent part of the Executive Committee," were present at the interview of Dec. 2d, (which was an *informal* meeting of members of the Committee,) and that thus complaints were made "*directly* to this Committee," "in the presence of the whole Executive Committee."—Whereas the fact is, (as we learn from an undoubted source,) that *but a single member of the Publishing Committee was present*. An interview between this one member and the Synod's Committee, is the only foundation for the flat contradiction given by the latter to the statement of the Publishing Committee that no complaint whatever had

been made directly to them. To this *one member* of the Publishing Committee, or rather *of* him, in his presence, they complained, near a month after making their appeal to the public,—and upon this meagre fact they rest their affirmation that “complaints have been made directly to the Publishing Committee,” and not only so, but leave the impression, (unintentionally, we are bound to believe,) that these complaints were submitted *before* making their appeal to the public. We know that such was the impression of many intelligent readers who did not particularly examine the dates; and such, we may add, was our own. Did not the Publishing Committee *know* whether any complaints had been made directly to them, or not? Did not Dr. Milnor, Dr. Knox, Dr. Sommers, Dr. Alexander, and Dr. Edwards, know?—None of them were at the meeting of Dec. 2d,—the only occasion on which the Synod’s Committee pretend to have complained directly to them. Dr. M’Auley was present, but it is hardly probable he considers himself the Publishing Committee.

It is worthy of remark, that this very question of remonstrances was one of the topics of discussion at the aforesaid meeting. It was stated by each of the three members of the Executive Committee representing the same denomination with the Synod’s Committee, and connected with the Synod of New York and New Jersey, that up to that hour, no member of the “Synod’s Committee,” nor any other person, had made any complaint to them, either personally or by letter, at any time or in any way, of the proceedings in the Publishing Department,—with the single exception of a brief interview had by the “Clerk of the Synod’s Committee” with one of them, about the time of the meeting of the Synod. Nor to any other member of the Executive Committee had any such remonstrance been made. Moreover, the Secretaries stated, that in their wide circle of acquaintance and correspondence, prior to the public appeal of the Synod’s Committee, no complaints had been made of the Publishing Committee’s proceedings, except by a single respected individual in this city, and by members of an ecclesiastical association *at its confidential meetings*, which two of the Secretaries attended as individuals, and not as officers of the Society; and further, that the particular complaints now urged by the Synod’s Committee, were far from being prominent among the objections then made.

In perfect keeping with the above, the Synod’s Committee ask,

“Did not he [the Senior Secretary] receive in January last, a copy of certain resolutions of the Fairfield West Consociation, expressive of their ‘strong disapprobation of the alterations’ made in D’Aubigne,” &c. And what if he did? Was not this remonstrance received, according to the Synod Committee’s own showing, *two months after* they had made their public appeal? And for aught that appears, it may have been an *effect*, instead of a justification, of the course of the Synod’s Committee.

If a bushel of such facts could be quoted, they would only prove (what nobody denies) that subsequently to the public *debut* of the Synod’s Committee, and probably in consequence of their representations, a portion of the Christian public became alarmed, and sent in remonstrances. Now if this alarm was unnecessary, or unfounded, so far from being a justification of the course of that Committee, it is a practical demonstration of its injustice and mischievous tendency.

We might here, with great propriety, quote the language of the Synod’s Committee in their third document, when they say,—“It is in vain to raise false issues; to attempt to divert the public mind from the real question in the case. * * * * The question must be met, and met fairly.”

Did you then, gentlemen of the Synod’s Committee, either as individuals or as a Committee, *ever* seek an interview with the Publishing Committee of the Tract Society, prior to making your public appeal? Between the date of your appointment and the publication of your first document, was not one of your number (your clerk) earnestly solicited by one of the Secretaries of the Society, to submit the complaints first to the Publishing Committee, that errors might be corrected, and that it might be seen how far the views of the Synod’s Committee could be met? But nothing of this kind could be yielded. And we affirm that no *direct* communication has been had to this day by the Synod’s Committee with the Publishing Committee. The informal meeting of 2d Dec., was with the *Executive* Committee. The Synod’s Committee in their 3d document, published *before* the Address of the Publishing Committee was issued, say, “they solicited, on the 25th of November, a conference with the Executive Committee of the Society, which took place on Monday, the 1st [2d] of December.” Their object seems to have been, not to obtain information, or heal differences, but to complain of the Publishing Committee

to the Executive Committee. They asked "what they might expect in reference to the future course of the *Publishing Committee*," (only one member of that Committee being present, as they well knew.) But they had already made their appeal to the public, and their demands were so broad and categorical, that there was little hope of inducing them to change their course by any concessions which could properly be made. Nor do we think there was any great object in arresting the discussion at that point. The mischief had been already done. The seeds of suspicion and distrust had been scattered far and wide. It might well be questioned whether it was not necessary now, that the whole matter should be publicly investigated and discussed. If "no response" to the interrogatory "has yet been given to the Committee," the explanation may possibly be gathered from the above remarks. It is a poor way first to knock a man down, and then ask him what he intends to do. If he intends to do nothing under such circumstances, but only to suffer, it is as much, perhaps, as can be expected from frail humanity.

APPENDIX.

At a meeting of the Publishing Committee of the American Tract Society, New-York, April 22, 1845, the attention of the Committee was called to the following minute, adopted by the Third Presbytery of New-York,* embodying resolutions submitted to the Presbytery by a Committee appointed to consider the subject, viz.

Minute of the Presbytery.

“In view of the discussion which has for some time been carried on in relation to the alteration of books by the American Tract Society, and in view of the fact that the Christian community have too great an interest at stake in standard religious works to allow the same to be altered and yet published as the works of their authors—therefore

“*Resolved*, That so far as the American Tract Society shall republish any work in an altered form, the same ought never to be published as the work of the author, nor in such a way as to attach any responsibility to his name, but should always bear either a new title, or a distinct announcement, upon the title-page, that it has been altered in accordance with the principles of said Society.

“*Resolved*, That there ought to be conspicuously inserted in the beginning of each volume issued by the American Tract Society, a clear statement of the principles upon which said Society is founded, and its publications prepared.

“At a meeting of the Third Presbytery of New-York, April 21, 1845, the above resolutions were unanimously adopted, and ordered to be signed by the Moderator and Clerk, and sent to the religious newspapers for publication.

“D. B. COE, Moderator.

“MASON NOBLE, Tem. Clerk.”

* To which those members of the Synod's Committee residing in the city belong.—*Eds. Jour. Com.*

Concurrence of the Publishing Committee.

On the reading and consideration of the above minute, the Publishing Committee

Resolved, That this Committee concur in the design of the above resolution ; and regretting that the Society's announcements, in connection with their imprint, have not hitherto been satisfactory to all, they will endeavor, in the future publication, both of new works and new editions of works already printed, to make such announcements as will leave no reasonable ground for misapprehension.

By order of the Publishing Committee.

THOMAS M'AULEY, Chairman pro tem.

W. A. HALLOCK, Cor. Sec.

The harmony exhibited in the above resolutions was only apparent, as will be seen by the following statement subsequently made by the Presbytery.

ACTION OF THIRD PRESBYTERY OF NEW-YORK,

Explanatory of their Preamble and Resolutions, relative to the American Tract Society, passed April 21st.

In view of the interpretations which have appeared in several of the public prints, of the Preamble and Resolutions of this Presbytery relative to the alteration of books by the American Tract Society, and to guard against any misunderstanding upon the subject, the Presbytery feel it to be their duty to state, that *they do not mean that the mere distinct announcement of alterations by the Tract Society is sufficient justification or authorization for such alterations.*" But they do intend, that when the least alteration is made in a work, the author's name ought to be entirely freed from responsibility for any part of said work, and that the fact should be clearly set forth, either by a change of title, or in some other way, distinctly upon the *title-page*, that the work is no longer to be regarded as the work of the author, but of the Society.

Neither do the Presbytery mean that the Tract Society have a right to alter books, and then give to the public their judgment of the extent and importance of such alterations without giving the alterations themselves, because this is a matter about which different individuals often form very different opinions. But they are willing to allow that said Society have the right to make alterations, provided they adopt and publish the books thus altered as their own, and not as the works of the authors, in such a way as to attach *any responsibility to their*

names. It is, of course, always understood that the Society are responsible to the public for the character of their alterations, and also of the works they publish.

The Presbytery regard the foregoing interpretation as the obvious and necessary one, of their resolutions referred to; but as they have seen a very different meaning affixed to them, they feel bound to state their true signification more explicitly, and remove all occasion of misapprehension.

And they feel more especially bound to do so, because they think the principle contained in their resolutions is the very least the Christian community can rightly be satisfied with in the proceedings of the Tract Society; and sooner than be satisfied with less, they ought to take the further step of resisting all alterations whatever in their standard religious works.

At a meeting of the Third Presbytery of New-York, April 28, the above document was *unanimously adopted*, and ordered to be signed by the Moderator and Clerk, and published in the New-York Evangelist and New-York Observer.

D. B. COE, *Moderator.*

MASON NOBLE, *Clerk.*

Here is a new phasis of the “invariably entire” rule which the Synod’s Committee laid down at the commencement of their labors of love. It is now admitted *unanimously*, (which implies the concurrence of those members of the Synod’s Committee belonging to this Presbytery,) that the Tract “Society have the right to make alterations, provided they adopt and publish the books thus altered, as their own, and not as the works of the authors, in such a way as to attach *any responsibility to their names.*” And pray, what does this mean? In a certain sense, the Society “adopt” all the works which they publish, and have always done so. They adopt them so far as to express their approbation of them, in the form in which they are issued.

But the Presbytery mean something more than this. They require the Society not only to endorse the works which they send forth, but to adopt and publish them “*as their own.*” How can they publish as their own, what is not their own? To do so, would neither be consistent with honesty nor truth. It would be unjust to the authors, and unjust to the public. It would be, in short, what is usually termed *literary piracy*. We hope the Presbytery will not compel the Society to engage in any such business.

The Presbytery go so far as to say, “that when the least alteration is made in a work, the author’s name ought to be entirely freed

from responsibility for any part of said work." Of course, Virgil, Horace, &c., ought to be freed from responsibility for the decent portions of their works used in our Colleges, and only be held responsible in case the dirt is included. Baxter and Flavel ought to be freed from any responsibility for the abridgments of their works in common use; and the same in the case of a hundred other authors.

The Presbytery further say, that when "the least alteration" is made in a book, it should be distinctly stated in the title-page "that the work is no longer to be regarded as the work of the author, but of the Society." With great deference, we think this would be equivalent, in many cases, to telling a falsehood. Suppose the Society should publish Scott's Commentary on the Bible, with the omission of three lines, and instead of stating that three lines had been omitted under such a chapter, should say that this Commentary was "no longer to be regarded as the work of Scott, but of the Society;" would they not be chargeable with a gross usurpation, to say the least? The necessity of depriving a man of three cents, is no reason why you should strip him of his whole property. Something besides "responsibility" attaches to authorship. There is reputation, and glory,—the most desired of earthly possessions. Why should an author be needlessly deprived of them? Why not publish an author's work, or any part of it, as his own, if it is his own? Why intimate to the public that it is another's, if it is his? A plain statement of facts is all that is required. In other words, a distinct announcement of the changes made. This the Society have aimed to do in time past, and are entirely willing and disposed to do it in time to come.

Instead of the twice modified rule of the Synod's Committee, and the equally absurd one of the Third Presbytery, how much more rational would it be to say, that if, in the exercise of a sound discretion, alterations should be deemed expedient, the fact of such alterations ought to be distinctly announced in the work itself; that so the author may be responsible for only what he wrote, and the Tract Society for their alterations.

